THE PLAYS OF JEAN BAPTISTE POQUELIN MOLIERE

Born January 15th (?), 1622 Died February 17th, 1673 In the age of Louis XIV

THE BLUNDERER L'ÉTOURDI

LOVERS' QUARRELS

DÉPIT AMOUREUX



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MOLIÈRE

THE

PLAYS OF MOLIERE

IN FRENCH

With an English Translation and Notes by A. R. WALLER, M.A.

and an Introduction by
GEORGE SAINTSBURY

VOLUME I 1655-1656

ILLUSTRATED WITH THIRTY-ONE ETCHINGS

AFTER LELOIR

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PREFACE

The translation here printed was begun some seven years ago. It was in a sufficiently advanced stage in 1902 to justify the publication of a volume or two, and, by 1905, four volumes had been published. Further work upon the edition was then interrupted, and a change of publisher was rendered necessary. I resumed the copyright of what had already been published, and, when Mr. John Grant asked me to allow him to complete the edition, I agreed. The reception given to the four volumes by the press and by those who bought them encouraged me to believe that there were many who found the edition to their liking, and it seemed a pity that, in some form or other, the complete work should not be available.

The edition was designed to meet the requirements of those who wished to have an inexpensive and well printed text of Molière in French; for those who, not knowing French, wished to have a rendering that should give them the letter of Molière and as much of the spirit as might be consistent with the difference of language and the failings of the translator; and, further, for those who, having some slight knowledge of French, might find a rendering in simple modern English, side by side with the French text, not unacceptable as a helpful companion in case of need

Molière in English blank verse is impossible; in rhymed couplets he reads more like the 'book' of a pantomime; I experimented a little in both before I came to the conclusion that the only possible way, so far as I was concerned, to render his verse comedies into English, was to render them in prose.

The French text is based upon the edition of MM. Eugène Despois and Paul Mesnard, and for leave to follow their text I am indebted to Messrs. Hachette and Company. Sooner or later, all students of Molière must turn to that monumental edition if they wish to have a thorough acquaintance with Molière's works. The few notes I have added at the end of each volume have been confined within the narrowest possible limits, since my aim all along has been that these volumes should constitute a 'reading' edition. The thirty-one etchings after Leloir appear now for the first time in an English edition of Molière.

I owe a word or two of thanks to Mr. W. H. Wrench of Messrs. T. and A. Constable, Edinburgh, the printers of these volumes, beyond what has been expressed on the margins of the proof-sheets. He has, from time to time, suggested happier renderings than my own, and I have gladly availed myself of them. And volumes one, seven and eight owe not a little to my wife.

A. R. WALLER.

INTRODUCTION

THE position of Molière in biography is somewhat like that of two very great English writers who had not a little in common with him in other ways-Shakespeare and Chaucer. That is to say, we have no inconsiderable number of documentary facts about him, but nothing, or next to nothing, of the real matter of biography-personal and private letters to and by him, minute and direct accounts of his character and manners from persons who knew him well, full details of incidents or conversations in which he took part. As his later date and different circumstances would lead us to expect, we have indeed a much larger amount of gossip about him, but the more this gossip is examined, the more untrustworthy it is seen to be. Through and behind his work there looms, of course, the mighty shadow of himself: but, as all critics of literature ought to know if they do not, this shadow is always the most treacherous thing in the world. Its features are sometimes created—are always shaped and coloured-by the eyes that see it: and, to vary Goethe's famous words, it may be like the Molière or the Shakespeare that the critic could understand, without being like the Shakespeare or the Molière of reality.

There is, however, this striking difference between

our documentary facts about Molière and those which we possess about Chaucer and even about Shakespeare, that almost all the former, after Molière's early youth, are directly connected with his work. It is therefore most convenient, in dealing with him, not to adopt the usual method of giving the Life first and surveying the Works afterwards, but to interweave the accounts and separate only the summings-up. The period of his actual and finished production covered not much more than a quarter of his life, for he was all but thirty-seven when L'Étourdi was first played in Paris, and he was not yet fifty-two when the 'sick man of fancy' left the stage to become the dead man of fact in the same night.

As again with Shakespeare, so with Molière, we do not know the day of his birth, but we do know that of his baptism, January 15, 1622. He was probably born in the Rue Saint-Honoré, Paris, where his father, Jean Poquelin, of an old bourgeois family from Beauvais, was an upholsterer. Nine years later this upholsterer became valet tapissier to Louis xIII. A year later again, in 1632, Molière lost his mother, whose maiden name was Marie Cressé. He went to school at the Collége de Clermont, a Jesuit establishment, where (though there are chronological difficulties) it is an accepted fact that he had for schoolfellow the Prince de Conti (younger brother of the great Condé), with whom he was certainly connected in after-life. After leaving school he studied philosophy and law, the former under Gassendi.1 Here also he had fellowstudents, distinguished though in another way, such as Cyrano de Bergerac and Chapelle. He is said to

¹ Gassendi is not mentioned by the oldest authorities; but there is little reason to doubt the fact.

have translated Lucretius, and the taint of Gassendi's epicureanism no doubt made itself suspicious to orthodoxy in subsequent controversies. As for law, it has been asserted, and never disproved, that he was actually called to the bar. At any rate, there is no doubt that his education was rather above than below the average of that of great men of letters. He had earlier received the reversion of his father's employment in the Royal Household, and perhaps actually accompanied Louis xIII. to Provence in 1642; in fact, legend connects him with the tragedy of Cing-Mars as having endeavoured to save the unlucky Grand Écuver. But he had caught stage-fever: at the beginning of 1643 he gave up his reversion, took the portion of his mother's goods that fell to him, and later in the year is found-in conjunction with three members, Joseph, Madeleine, and Geneviève, of the Bejard or Bejart family, with which he was ever afterwards connected, and others—as occupier of a tenniscourt for theatrical purposes. The company called itself L'Illustre Théâtre. He was still Jean Baptiste Poquelin simply-Molière was a stage-name which he assumed, we do not know why, and we do not know exactly when.1 According to frequent if not universal stage custom, he became M. de Molière-the 'de' even in ordinary life having none of the exclusive and universal connection with nobility which was afterwards assigned to it. And till long after he had distinguished himself as an author the name was constantly spelt Mollier; indeed, the pronunciation of the two forms is said to have been at the time identical. In any cu +he name was a real one, and had belonged to, or been .. med by, a romance-writer years earlier.

¹ It first appears in a legal document dated June 28, 1644.

And there was even a third Mollier or Molière who, as a dancer and musician, actually performed in his great namesake's pieces during his lifetime.

But distinction was in no hurry, and in a year or two the Illustrious Theatre discovered that 'Paris' was a shorthand form of 'arrestment for debt.' Molière himself seems to have undergone this process. For a time they had the countenance of 'Monsieur.' the King's brother, Gaston d'Orléans, but the protection of Gaston never did good to any human creature. At last-whether after previous essays or not is a moot question, but from 1647 pretty certainly onwardsthe company determined to take to that nomad life of the player which seems to possess such a curious mixture of inconvenience and fascination, and of which, as regards this particular period, we have a direct picture of great talent from Scarron in the Roman Comique, and a marvellous recreation of genius from Gautier in Le Capitaine Fracasse.

The biographers have 'extenuated themselves' upon the ten years from 1648 to 1658. The régistre of La Grange the actor (who, according to another Shakespearian coincidence, was Molière's comrade during his life, and his first editor after his death) does not begin so early, but it has some backward entries: and the Preface of the edition of 1682, with divers business entries of various kinds, preserved after the methodical habit of the French, supplies dates which sometimes require harmonising, sometimes not. Bordeaux, Nantes, Toulouse, Lyons almost as a head-quarters, Montpellier, Rouen, and many lesser places had the advantage of welcoming, or the shame of not welcoming, the Illustrious Ones. Two books which belong in a way to literature, the Memoirs of Daniel

de Cosnac and the Aventures Burlesques of Charles d'Assoucy, give pretty positive information. Cosnac was of the household of the Prince de Conti, Molière's schoolfellow, who, after experiences in the Fronde ranging from popular idolatry to imprisonment at the hands of Anne of Austria and Mazarin, was, in 1653, honourably shelved in Languedoc: and he induced the Prince to patronise Molière's company at his house of La Grange, at the neighbouring town of Pézenas, and at Montpellier, at both of which places the estates of the province met. A pension for the company and considerable lump-sums as 'gratifications' were the result of Cosnac's good offices, of those of Conti's secretary, Sarrasin, a really considerable man of letters, and of the merits of the troupe itself.1 D'Assoucy, who was certainly a picaro and very probably a scoundrel, but not without wits and a certain bonhomie, and who travelled about France and Italy giving nondescript musical entertainments, seems to have met with a very amiable and unenvious reception from the company at Lyons in 1655. It is disputed whether L'Étourdi, the first 'number' of Molière's recognised theatre, appeared in this year or earlier, in 1653; there seems to be no doubt that the next and still better one, the Dépit Amoureux, was produced at Béziers in 1656. Two years later the last provincial stage of the Illustrious Theatre at Rouen gave Molière an opportunity of negotiating for the protection of the new and younger 'Monsieur,'

¹ Later, Conti fell under Jansenist influences, interdicted theatrical performances, Molière's and others, as far as he could, and wrote a book, not without a certain importance, intrinsic and influential, in literary and critical history, against the stage.

Louis xIV.'s brother Philippe, who constituted them his 'servants'-'the Duke's House,' as shortly afterwards it would have been called in England. This gave them a title no more burlesque; a re-entry to the capital, now settled and laying itself out seriously for pleasure and servitude; patronage which might mean anything or nothing, but was at any rate 'a spring-board'-in fact, for the first time what is called an opening. As means for availing themselves of this opening they had fifteen years' practice; apparently (with no doubt plenty of petty jealousies and bickerings) a pretty solid esprit de corps and habit of working together; a considerable répertoire of stock pieces, Corneille's and others, with certain specialties of their own to supplement it; and one of the men of greatest genius then living in Europe for leader, chief actor, and chief author.

It may not be improper at this point to call a halt in the narrative for a few general observations on the constitution of this, the most famous company as such that the theatrical world has known; on the relations of its members to each other; on the arrangements of the theatre at the time; on the antecedent history of French comedy; and on the state of French manners—things by general consent more closely connected with comedy than with any other literary kind.

As for this earliest maison de Molière, the more important members were at first, as has been said, Molière himself, the three Béjarts (of whom [the brother 1] Joseph seems to have been particularly good

¹ The Béjart family form a sort of chronological and genealogical puzzle, which has been variously solved according to the extremely lax ways of solving such things usual in

at old women's parts, then generally acted by men). and Du Parc, who, according to a fashion still prevalent, though going out, was known as 'Gros René,' Between Madeleine Béjart and Molière scandal of a persistent and never-refuted kind has always asserted the existence of very close relations, though an atrocious exaggeration of it in reference to the youngest sister, Armande (Molière's future wife, and long afterwards a member of the troupe likewise), has no justification. After a few years Du Parc married a wife with the extremely beautiful name of Marquise de Gorla, who also acted, and the troupe was further joined by a married couple named De Brie. du Parc (the wives of actors were always called Mlle.. not Mme.) and Mlle. de Brie are supposed by the same scandal to have succeeded or supplemented Madeleine Béjart in their manager's and comrade's affections. Both were beautiful: Isidore in Le Sicilien. with her blue eyes, her dimpled chin, and her nez

literary commentary. They used to be arranged on a line as brothers and sisters from Joseph to Armande, Molière's wife. Then Joseph was elevated to the position of father of Madeleine and Geneviève (or rather it was discovered that there were two Josephs, father and son, though the father is called Georges in a legal document), and Madeleine was elevated or degraded to the position of mother of Armande, with or without the venomous addition referred to below in the text. Tallemant des Réaux, no doubt erroneously, calls the brother Jacques, and there was yet another brother, Louis, who also became an actor. The formal documents relating to the marriage positively describe Madeleine and Armande as sisters. Of the numerous libels on Molière and his connections, the chief, besides the long-subsequent lampoon on his widow, to be also noticed below, is the Elomire ('Molière' anagrammatised) Hypocondre of Le Boulanger de Chalussav. published in 1670.

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un peu trop gros (like Madame de Sévigné's) is supposed to be a portrait of Mlle. de Brie, who apparently created the part. These two ladies, till Armande Béjart joined, took the chief female parts, Molière the great male ones; and though all the forces of theatrical and literary jealousy combined to abuse him, there seems to be no doubt that, however inferior the kind of acting may be to the kind of writing, his right to these, parts was not official or usurped, but natural. There are no two characters in which tradition assigns to him greater success than those of Alceste and of M. Jourdain: and an actor who can play these two has very nearly 'filled all numbers' as far as non-romantic comedy goes.

The arrangements of the actual theatre on which he and his company played were, even in the capital, an odd compound of splendour and shabbiness. Until after 1660 the buildings had rarely been intended for the purpose, but were converted tennis-courts or other makeshifts. The fittings-up were neither magnificent nor comfortable, most of the audience standing in the pit. though (as in England long before, though apparently the institution was more recent in France) you could sit on the stage, to the great inconvenience of the actors. There was very little regular scenery. and very few properties, these being of the simplest description. Candles were stuck about in sconces on the walls, and (not invariably) in rude, cross-shaped wooden chandeliers. Considerably more attention. however, seems to have been paid, when it was possible, to the wardrobe. In the early days of the Illustre Théâtre the Duke of Guise is said to have given it his cast-off clothes; but when success came nothing was spared on the costumes, and Molière

himself seems, from the particulars that we have of those in which he played most of his celebrated parts, to have been by no means indifferent to splendour in this respect. Satin and velvet and gold figure largely, while many of the most famous pieces positively necessitated exemplifications of the elaborate fashions of the day, huge canons (knee-ruffles), buckles, plumed hats, wide-skirted coats, gaudily mounted swords, costly wigs, and the rest.

The disparity of the apparatus was not in renected in the character of the comedies (to confine ourselves to these) which were presented. The French comedy was of a much 'truer' stock (to speak as the gardeners) than the French tragedy; it went right back to the early thirteenth century through a long and unbroken succession of work, inclining indeed to the farcical side of the kind, but not the less comedy for that. In the century before Molière, however, it had been strongly 'crossed' from classical Italian and Spanish sources; and it cannot be said that, as yet, the various strains had resulted in a thoroughly satisfactory blend. In the earlier part of this century (the latter half of the sixteenth) the Pléiade dramatists and Larivey (from the last of whom Molière himself took something) had done not a little; and in the later part (the first half of the seventeenth) men of talent, sometimes running very close to genius, had done more. Had Corneille gone on with comedy after Le Menteur. and had his subsequent work been as much better than that as that was better than its forerunners. Molière would have been put to it to surpass him. And as it was, Scarron, Cyrano de Bergerac, Saint-Evremond, and, even later, Quinault, Boursault, Montfleury, did remarkable things. But in nearly

all the earlier work and much of the later (for the last three named dramatists were contemporaries of Molière's, and in some cases his rivals) there were two great shortcomings. In the first place, the playwrights were almost invariably making a sort of 'ragdoll,' patched together from all sorts of incongruous originals-Terentian or Italian comedy of stock types. characters, and personages: French farce of the old fabliau kind; Spanish 'cape and sword' or 'picaresque' convention. In the second—if indeed this be not merely another way of stating the first-they either never dared simply to hold up the mirror to nature and manners; or else the manners, if not the nature, to which they were accustomed were of too unsettled, not to say uncouth, a kind to give them steady, well-posed, probable subjects, possessing, in the ancient as well as in the modern sense, 'decency' -that is to say, submission within reasonable degrees to conventional and reasonable behaviour.

The truth is, though it has not been generally recognised, that the French comedy of the midseventeenth century is as much a 'humour-comedy' as the English, though more of the humours are merely traditional and literary. How terribly high the rest ran at times can best be learned from a study of Tallemant des Réaux, hardly the most extravagant of whose scandals lacks corroboration from sober and well-authenticated memoirs of the time. They turned, indeed, too constantly to the tragic to be safely usable as comic matter at all. Molière, who 'improved' everything, may have taken a hint for the famous cancelled scène du Pauvre in Don Juan, from the story, told, I think, in more than one form, of a guerilla chief in the religious wars, and of a duellist,

who promised to spare their vanquished foes on condition of the victims denying their faith, and then killed them. But even he could have made nothing of the seigneur who, not content with outraging a vassal's wife, flogged her, and was shot by the husband through a closed window (to which the avenger had climbed) as he stood on his own hearth entertaining friends.

Still, Richelieu's scaffolds and Mazarin's prisons had let out or tamed a good deal of this wild blood. The French nobility had been 'silly enough to take Rochelle,' as the best of Bassompierre's many good savings has it; and the French bourgeoisie had not been silly enough to persevere in playing the game of the nobility, though they too had been silly enough to play it to the extent of losing all their best privileges in the Fronde. Non-political influences of a softening kind, too, came in; and the milder eccentricities of that Hôtel de Rambouillet. which Molière ungratefully but unavoidably satirised helped to reduce to a 'satirisable' mediocrity the atrocities and ferocities of the earlier generation. The marguis ridicule took the place of the ruffianly baron; the précieuse or the femme savante partly, though by no means wholly, that of the 'pard-like spirits,' beautiful, voluptuous, and cruel, of whom the last specimen in perfection was Marie d'Avaugour de Bretagne, Duchess of Montbazon.

But this subsidence from the heroic towards—not yet to—the commonplace was but just begun when the troupe of Molière settled in Paris for good; and there is no evidence—nor indeed much probability—that he had taken up the direct castigation of morals earlier. Indeed, in the provinces, it would have been

far too dangerous. The actual répertoire of his own work with which he started was, so far as we know, composed of the two first substantive plays, L'Étourdi and the Dépit, together with an uncertain number of smaller farcical sketches of the old type, but already shot with Molièresque humour. Two only of these—La Jalousie du Barbouillé and Le Médecin Volant—are extant; but we have the names of others, and one of these, as we shall see presently, played an important part at the critical moment.

In consequence of the negotiations with Monsieur the company was formally presented to Louis xIV., and they played before him at the Louvre on October 24, 1658. The 'some confounded play or other' (as Shadwell put it in one of his least dull moments some years later) was Corneille's Nicomède -not the worst but far from the happiest effort of that great dramatist, and not in all probability specially suited to bring out the illustriousness of Molière and his fellows. But Molière asked and obtained leave to follow it with one of his own farces of the type just referred to, and this, Le Docteur Amoureux (which has not survived, but the nature of which one can easily fancy), was played with complete success. Establishment in Paris was authorised; a hall in the Petit Bourbon-the old half-destroyed and soon-tobe-destroyed-utterly palace of the unlucky Constable -was assigned to the company on alternate days with an Italian troupe. And so the Maison de Molière was housed in the other sense. But it did not become the King's own troupe for another seven years; and the coalition which made it the 'Théâtre Francais' did not take place till after Molière's own death. During the whole of his life there was much rivalry

and jealousy with the older houses of the Marais and the Hôtel de Bourgogne—even occasional desertions between the hostile camps. The opposition actors were spiteful; the opposition playwrights were venomous and furious. But Molière had come to his own in place, and he held it. Before long he came to his own in genius likewise.

1 The anecdotes about Molière are very numerous, and most of them are better known than the facts: but they are even more doubtful. Of the two most famous, that of the en cas de nuit-which asserts that the King, to rebuke some discourtesy of his courtiers towards Molière, made the actor partake of, or at least sit down to, the repast provided in case of his being hungry at night-is very late, and very weakly supported; while it is regarded as a priori impossible by those who lay stress on the rigid etiquette of Louis in these matters. If it be so, we must also give up the prowess of Porthos in the King's company, which would be a pity. The other is that of 'Molière's old woman,' as she is generally called-of the servant (not necessarily old) to whom he used to read his plays, taking her as a barometer of public taste. This claims Boileau as its sponsor, and coincides to some extent with the curious and early assertion that an actual servant of the dramatist's acted Martine in the Femmes Savantes. The commentators are half enraptured by the fact that we actually possess the names of some women-servants of Molière's, and half in despair at the difficulty of deciding between them. Yet another—that of an angry marquis (duke rather, the Duke de la Feuillade) availing himself of the clumsy embracing habits of the time, and scratching Molière's face against his buttons till he drew blood, crying Tarte à la crême! the while-has met with some favour. We may, at any rate, remember that, not many years earlier, the great Duke de la Rochefoucauld, flower of the French nobility for brains and stately manners as well as birth, certainly caught, or caused to be caught, the almost equally great Cardinal de Retz's head between two folding-doors, and held it there. It is true that he seems to have had the nobler aim, not merely

For the first year in Paris-November 1658 to November 1659—he depended, naturally and wisely, on his stock, the chief constituents of which, L'Étourdi and Le Dépit Amoureux, were quite new to Parisian audiences. L'Étourdi was very closely adapted from an Italian original, L'Inavvertito, and is itself reproduced in Sir Martin Mar-all, which, not many years afterwards. Dryden helped the Duke of Newcastle to write, or perhaps very mainly wrote for him. The theme-the way in which a blundering young ne'erdo-weel, not so much stupid as hopelessly featherheaded, perpetually ruins the ingenious schemes which his servant devises-is amusing enough; and the servant. Mascarille, is said to have been played by Molière with such verve that there was some danger of the name Mascarille sticking to him, as had been rather common with actors. He had also freshened up the dialogue (at least as it seems to the present writer) with a good deal of his own spirit. But undoubtedly the piece was only 'new and original' in the peculiar and Pickwickianly theatrical sense of If, however, any one cares to compare L'Étourdi and the two little farces above mentioned with any precedent French comedy, he will, I think, discover what is meant by this 'spirit of his own.' You cannot define spirits, but you can be aware of their presence.

This thing was, by common consent, shown strongly in *Le Dépit Amoureux*; and the manner of its showing possesses a sort of scientific and positively biological interest. The play consists of two parts, almost as

of insulting and hurting, but of assassinating, though this did not come off. The chivalry of France at the time was not quite up to the standard of Mr. Burke. sharply divided from one another as those of the 'strapped-together' tragi-comedies of the minor Elizabethans; and, as a matter of fact, these parts have, for theatrical purposes, been long actually unstrapped. One, like L'Étourdi, directly reproduces the intrigue of an Italian original—not in this case amusing at all, but dull, clumsy, and rather disgusting. The other, consisting of the quarrels and reconciliations of master and lackey with mistress and maid, is pure Molière (though not yet quite quintessenced), and therefore is some of the best fun in the world.

But if L'Étourdi had been mainly spirited adaptation, and the Dépit adaptation plus originality, originality (in the wide not the narrow sense) was to exert itself alone and triumphantly in the third important piece, now 'new and original' in every sense. that was played in Paris-the immortal and delightful Précieuses Ridicules. Not of course that Molière can claim, or would have cared to claim, the worthless merit of 'doing everything out of his own head.' It is the right and the duty of the great novelist and the great dramatist-who are both more directly connected with actuality than any other men of pure letters-to gather where they have not strawed, to take their goods wherever they find them.1 In this very play the notable name 'Gorgibus,' a favourite with Molière, and one which looks as if it must have been invented, had actually been that borne or assumed by one of the wicked false witnesses whom the Mazarin party suborned against the innocent

¹ This, which was apparently said of Cyrano, some would interpret as a claim to actual authorship, Molière having furnished the passages in their early acquaintanceship. But this is improbable, forced, prosaic, and needless.

Cardinal de Retz years earlier. Nav. the famous lune toute entière is no invention, but is attributed by Tallemant to a certain Marquis de Nesle, without any reference to this play, and almost certainly before it was written. Molière's originality, like all the greatest kinds of that quality, consists in treatment, in application, in form. But here at least he borrowed nothing directly in subject: for the allegations of indebtedness to the Abbé de Pure, and the Italians. are frankly unintelligent. Preciousness-with its headquarters indeed in the famous coterie of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, but with outposts and flying squadrons all over France-was an institution a generation old by this time. Without falling into the common literary fault of trying to be too precise about vague things, one can discern many influences and reactions in it—reactions and influences literary. social, political almost, and of many other kindssome survivals even. There was the above-mentioned revulsion-a very beneficent and indeed necessary one -against the incredible brutality of manners in the highest French circles already mentioned, as to which Tallemant joins hands with Brantôme in exhibiting it from early sixteenth century to mid-seventeenth. There was the survival of literary fancy for 'aureate,' euphuist, metaphysical diction. There was the special taste for the artificial-heroic romance. There was a further survival of the old Renaissance reverence for learning and learned men. And perhaps there was something of an effort among ladies by birth to differentiate themselves from the invading tribe of persons connected with law, finance, the public service-an effort which, of course, could only lead to eager adoption of 'preciousness' by these very

persons themselves. At any rate, the whole made an ideal subject for dramatic satire; and it met with consummate treatment. The piece is just the right length, its high-jinks are just not too high, and it is very important to observe that, severe as it is, the satire is not in the least cruel. The girls are quit for their folly by being made fools of-some dramatists would have carried their punishment much further. Gorgibus himself, whatever his annoyance, may, when he recovered his temper, have thought the lesson not too heavily paid for. There is no doubt that Mascarille and Jodelet, in one way or another, got compensation for their beatings and strippings. It is la bonne comédie-intensely ludicrous, but never in the least savage, engineered with perfect theatrical skill, and clothed with a perfectly literary garment of diction. There is only one point of pathos connected with it. Jodelet, one of the most famous if not the most famous of the older generation of actors, had 'come over to help' the new company, and appears to have played the part that bears his name most brilliantly to Molière's Mascarille. But he died in the spring, and could do no more for his new comrades.

They only played one more piece, Sganarelle ou Le Cocu Imaginaire (which we may group with some others later) in the Petit Bourbon. This was pulled down in October 1660, and the company transferred to the Palais Royal, with its memories of Richelieu, and his Five Poets, and his dramatic ambitions. Molière was not lucky with his overture, Don Garcie de Navarre, one of the numerous, but not quite universal, instances of the tendency of the greatest men to mistake their vocation. It is a tragi-comedy, or

rather a tragical comedy, of jealousy, exceedingly dull to read (Sainte-Beuve ingeniously called it an essai pâle et noble), and it is said that it was badly acted. It was withdrawn, and seems never to have reappeared, except in part during the Année Terrible in 1870-1—an odd juxtaposition of disasters. At midsummer appeared L'École des Maris, one of the numerous adjustments of the Terentian Adelphi with variations; and later in the summer, the very amusing Les Fâcheux, played before the King at Fouquet's fatal Fête of Vaux, and containing at least one scene suggested by Louis himself.

Next spring, on an uncertain day, Molière married Armande Béjart.¹ The arrangement, though we may put the worst scandal glanced at aside, was undoubtedly an 'inconvenient' one, and it may have brought trouble with it; but the present writer, at any rate, has no doubt that this trouble has been immensely exaggerated. Or, to speak with almost legal exactness, he believes that there is very little evidence of it. We may not indeed attach very much weight to the laborious alibis which have been worked out for Mademoiselle Molière's supposed lovers, and to other maladroit defences of the kind. Here one may vary the Ariostian incredulity in a similar matter, and say, 'Perhaps the defence is true, but it is not very convincing.' If Armande Béjart was a bourgeoise Faustina

¹ Her full name was Armande-Grésinde-Claire-Elisabeth, and she seems generally to have used the first two members of it. There is perhaps less difficulty than has sometimes been thought in identifying her with 'a little unbaptized sister' of the Béjarts, who appears in a document of March 1643; but more in another identification with a child called Mile. Menou, who is mentioned in 1653 as having pleased Molière by reciting verses.

or Messalina, no doubt she found plenty of opportunities to behave as such, even when this particular marquis was at Lons-le-Saulnier, and that particular viscount in Lithuania. If she was not actually first too jealous, and then too fond, of the young actor Baron, the temptations of her life would have been open to her in plenty of other instances. Far more really important facts are these, that the chief source of the aspersions on her character, the anonymous La Fameuse Comédienne, dates from 1688. long after Molière's death and her second marriage: secondly, that numerous and savage as were Molière's enemies during his life, none asserted 1 that he was his own Sganarelle, less the 'Imaginary,' though they did say that he was jealous, which is exceedingly probable. Jealousy is, if not the invariable, the usual seamy side of love; and all parties are agreed that Molière loved his wife, if only too well. Nor does it seem at all unlikely that she was a considerable flirt. For she appears to have been, if not regularly beautiful (her eyes were too small), extremely attractive; she had been born and brought up in Bohemian society; and she was on the stage. Probably she gave Molière not a few uncomfortable sensations; that she gave him any cause for worse things there is, as has been said, no evidence whatsoever. Célimène in Le Misanthrope has always been supposed to have been drawn from, as well as for, her: and all one need say is, that

¹ There are some ugly insinuations in the opposition pieces of the École des Femmes squabble; but they do not go beyond insinuation. On the other hand, Visé in 1663, in a comparatively serious and far from friendly criticism, definitely includes Molière among jealous, and excludes him from among betrayed, husbands.

if nobody had a worse wife than Célimène would probably have made, nobody would be very unhappily married. As for the little sparring-match in the Impromptu de Versailles (v. inf.), it must be a very dull or a singularly inexperienced person who can see domestic tragedy, past, present, or future, in that. She is again identified with the portrait of Lucile in the Bourgeois Gentilhomme, which is lover's work, not only as it is drawn on the stage, but as it is written from the heart and brain. If a man could write like that of his wife's person and character nearly ten years after they were married, there was not much amiss, or there was very much that made amends for what there was.

Whatever bad effect Molière's marriage may have had, it certainly did his genius no harm. At the end of the year appeared L'École des Femmes, perhaps the first of those plays which are generally accounted majorum gentium among Molière's. We may have something to say against the justness of this distinction later; but the consummate wit and nature of this piece are undeniable. Unfortunately it did, to a very small extent, lend itself to the accusation of what is called (in French of Stratford-atte-Bowe) double entendre. These accusations were multiplied and intensified absurdly; and (though in this case with not even the same slight amount of justification) they were made to lend themselves to much more serious accusations of impiety. Molière had already enemies enough in rival actors, rival authors, and the marquis and others whom he satirised—enemies who were prepared to move Heaven, earth, and Acheron (besides the Queen-mother) against him. They had now, as they thought, an opportunity, if not of getting Heaven

on their side, of putting themselves on the side of Heaven, and against Molière. And in a very short time Tartuffe and Don Juan gave them more. These latter accusations were far more serious for Molière than anything else; and it may be well to say something about them at once, anticipating a little in regard to the later plays with which they are concerned.

That the anti-Molièrists should have tried to enlist the Church on their side can excite no surprise, but why the Church should have allowed itself to be enlisted may not be so obvious. It may seem that no one but an absolute fool can have seen any real slight on religion in L'École des Femmes. It may be asked with wonder why Devotion, if real itself, should be offended at the condign punishment inflicted in Tartuffe on its counterfeit and worst enemy, Hypocrisythe vice most hated of God and most noisome to men. Don Juan, though containing some things startling to weak brethren, can hardly be said to encourage either vice or impiety, seeing that the representative of both comes to an end which few persons would exactly court, and is loaded throughout with the disapproval of every one, from his respectable father to his rascally valet. But no doubt these considerations do not settle the matter; nor is it sufficient to laugh it off with the observation, undoubtedly true as it is, that there were certainly many fools, and probably not a few hypocrites, among Molière's enemies. In the first place, in order really to understand it, we must remember that the antipathy of Church to Stage-originating. for very good reasons, in the earliest ages of Christianity, and brought rather to a truce than to a peace during the mediæval period, when the Stage had in a

manner become a department of the Church itself—had broken out once more when the Stage emancipated itself, and had been proof even against the fact that the Church's rebels—the extreme Protestant sects—partook, and even exaggerated, the dislike.

This antipathy had brought about in France all sorts of curious conventions and restrictions, such as (one which Molière himself generally though not invariably observes) that you must not so much as mention the word eglise in a play, though temple, as partly Pagan and partly Protestant, was permissible. And it might, of course, at any moment breed trouble in honest minds of various classes. For one class may stand Pierre Roullé, curé of the appropriate parish of Saint Barthélemy, who wrote, or rather screamed, on Tartuffe to the effect that Molière was a 'demon, clad in flesh and blood,' and distinctly wished him a fleshand-blood experience of the element with which demons are supposed to be familiar. Roullé of course was merely a fool. But Bourdaloue was not a fool: and Bourdaloue called Tartuffe a 'damnable invention.' Baillet, the author of Jugemens des Savants, may have been nearer to Roullé than to Bourdaloue in actual brains, but he was certainly a long way from the mental state of the Curate of Saint Bartholomew's, and yet he denounced Molière as one of the most dangerous enemies of the Church. As for Bossuet, his much later censure must be qualified by the remembrance that he was first of all a born rhetorician, and that Molière's death gave opportunities which no born rhetorician could resist. But still Bossuet is never negligible. The truth seems to befor though we have no space for long digression on

the subject, the thing is too important in regard to Molière's life and work to be merely glanced at-that Molière hit several weak and sore places at once. Jansenists and Jesuits eagerly identified each the other with Tartuffe; but there is no doubt that both secretly owed Molière a grudge for suggesting the identification. An odder thing, but certain in Baillet's case and probable in others, was that much of the resentment seems to have been directed against the usurvation by a mere player of the right of reproving And it may be feared that we must add a less unreasonable but far more discreditable motive. The fact was that the personnel and moral of the French Church at this time were not in a state that would bear investigation or criticism-the ark which was guarded by the Retzes1 and the Harlays was much too rotten to be touched.2 But we must return to our chronicle.

The year 1663 was chiefly occupied by the quarrels over L'École des Femmes, in which Molière's chief enemies were the journalist and literary hack, Donneau de Visé (afterwards converted), and the rival dramatist Boursault, supported by a crowd of angry marquises, précieuses, dévôts, scribblers, players, etc. Their rage went to such a pitch that the elder Montfleury formally accused Molière to the King of having married his own daughter. But in February 1664, the

¹ I speak only of Retz as a Churchman. As a man he was quite pardonable, and as a man of letters he needs no pardon.

² Nobody need refer me to Louis Veuillot on this subject. I have an immense admiration for his craftsmanship and no antipathy for his point of view. But advocates—especially advocate-bravos—prove nothing.

King himself and his sister-in-law, Henrietta of England, stood by proxy as godfather and godmother to the Molières' first child.1 And the royal favour further enabled Molière to take still better vengeance in his own way, by two pieces-irregular, almost Aristophanic, in their kind, but extraordinarily full of wit and vigour. These are the Critique de L'École des Femmes, in which the common objections to the piece are acted to more than the life, and the Impromptu de Versailles, in which the joke in earnest is carried still farther by the company appearing in their own persons as at a rehearsal, and discussing themselves and their enemies. There is nothing quite like these two pieces in modern literature, for though actors had appeared in their own persons, both on French and English stages, these appearances could only be regarded as suggestions of the Critique and the Impromptu, while almost everything of the kind since has been more than suggested by them.

The year which was opened, or nearly so, by the royal sponsorship was again one of triumph and trouble; but the triumphs were less and the trouble, serious even at first, became more serious later. The King was particularly fond of comédie-ballets, things in which a more or less slight and sometimes, though not always, quite separate drama of the lighter kind

¹ The juxtaposition of two sentences in the text gives what, till very recently, was the accepted view. It has, however, been questioned whether Montfleury, for whose action we have no evidence but a statement of Racine's, went so far in accusation, and whether the royal favour had anything to do with it. Molière and Armande, it may be added, had three children. Two boys died young; the third, a girl, Esprit Madeleine, married, rather late, a M. de Montalant, and died childless in 1723.

was intermixed with all sorts of spectacle, musical interlude, and dancing in which he himself and his courtiers could, if they chose, take an actual part. In fact these things were very nearly masques of the Jonsonian kind, with the purely dramatic part much more developed. Molière has been pitied for having to 'make sport' with such pieces, of which, by the wav. Les Fâcheux had been one; but they evidently suited his genius very well, and some of almost his best things are contained in them. Le Mariage Forcé. the first of them in this year, is slight (though there is the true Molière in the consultation of Sganarelle with the philosophers Pancrace and Marphurius), and it owes much to Rabelais. La Princesse d'Élide, which followed, and which contains some very pretty and some very amusing touches, is actually unfinishedso largely was the comedy in these cases a mere vehicle for the 'entertainment.' But among the same princely pleasures of Versailles (Les Plaisirs de l'Ile Enchantée) appeared also-not unacceptably it would seem, and perhaps not so incongruously as it may appear to us who look back through the smoke of the explosion that followed—the three first acts of Tartuffe. Strangely enough, in this time of endless private gossip, and almost as endless official record about Court amusements, we have not a single account, given at once and before the storm broke, of the actual reception of the piece. But a week later its production in public was forbidden; though it was again played, as three acts only, at Villers Cotterets during an entertainment given by Monsieur to the King and Queen in September, and as a whole at Raincy, under the patronage of Condé in November. The 'suppression' (Molière's own word) is attributed to the influence of Anne of Austria, who was then in a dying condition. To its future fortunes we shall come by and by.

Perhaps one of the strongest proofs (though I do not remember to have seen it much urged) that Molière meant no harm by Tartuffe is the nature of the piece that followed it. This was most unlucky and not a little surprising in a man of such shrewdness, who had had two warnings, and who, if we may trust Boileau's Boswell, Brossette, had been expressly cautioned by the King that 'les dévôts sont implacables.' Nothing but sheer stupidity (which need hardly be discussed), extreme rashness (of which there is no sign in him), or that blindness which comes of innocence, can explain the tender of Don Juan to a pack of wolves actually growling over L'École des Femmes and Tartuffe. He was, of course, morally justified if he chose to wrap himself in that innocence and say 'Honni soit qui mal y pense'; but such an attitude would not have been business, and would have been unfair to his family and his company, while he seems to have been devoted to both. The play is a very fine one, and while the tragic part of the wonderful and poetic legend is perfectly rendered. the comic additions and contrasts are of the very best Molière. Nothing but the most 'fugitive and cloistered' piety could honestly object to it; as for the dishonestly pious, it must have been as much more unpleasant than Tartuffe as Don Juan's final destination was than the 'Impostor's' temporary one. Anyhow, it was ferociously attacked, and the representation stopped suddenly-no doubt by order, though we do not know this as a fact.

But it took a good deal to suppress Molière. In

the words of one of the greatest efforts of the Muse of Parody:

'He was more than three examiners Could plough from morn to night';

and pedants, and fribbles, and true or false bigots combined could never quench his vein. Later, in 1665, he produced the admirable comédie-ballet of L'Amour Médecin, which enshrines the famous 'Vous êtes orfévre, M. Josse'; he followed it in the summer of 1666 with Le Misanthrope, which it is customary in French literary criticism to couple with Tartuffe as the masterpieces not merely of his but of their comic theatre. Perhaps a little of the distinguo is here necessary, but it may be better given later. This, in any case, capital play was succeeded quickly by the delightful Médecin Malgré Lui, one of his greatest eternisings of old fabliau motives. At the close of this year and the beginning of the next there was a series of fêtes at Versailles to which Molière contributed three pieces-Mélicerte, of the kind of the Princesse d'Élide, the unimportant Pastorale Comique, and one of his most charming small things, Le Sicilien, or L'Amour Peintre, the last of which became deservedly popular. Later, the King went to Flanders, and it seems that he gave (when and how is unknown) some sort of permission to set Tartuffe free. It was actually represented, though with the title changed to L'Imposteur, and the hero-villain's name changed to Panulphe, in August. But the First President, Lamoignon, who had been left in charge, once more interdicted it; whereupon two of the company posted off to the camp, presented a petition (the second of the kind) to the King, and seem to have obtained some sort of promise of relief.

But the Archbishop of Paris, Hardouin de Péréfixe, struck in with a formal threat of excommunication to all who played, read, or heard the piece—which settled the matter for the time. Molière, who had long been suffering from the lung disease which killed him later, seems now to have been overwhelmed for a time, and the theatre was even shut.

But he rallied. 1668 saw the admirable adaptation from Plautus of Amphitryon, the incomparable farce-tragedy of George Dandin and his marriage into the family of Sotenville, and the triumph (again adapted from the Latin and Italian, but made amply his own) of L'Avare, one of the most perfect things that even he had done. And this battle of heart against fate was rewarded by the setting free of Tartuffe in February 1669, with the immense success which its merits deserved, and which the tactics of its opponents had made certain. It was played twentyeight days running-the first half of them with enormous receipts for the time-between the beginning of February and Easter, nineteen times in May and June, and again later. But Molière, before its first vogue was over, 'tricked it up' with the admirable contrast of M. de Pourceaugnac in September. 1670 saw, in his two manners, the Court entertainment of Les Amants Magnifiques and the again incomparable Bourgeois Gentilhomme. Next year he joined Corneille, Quinault, and Lulli in the 'tragedy-ballet' of Psyche, and then wrote and produced two light comedies of his own particular style-Les Fourberies de Scapin and La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas. 1672 had one (but as Herrick says of his Sappho, 'a principal') in Les Femmes Savantes, where the satire of the Précieuses Ridicules was repeated more seriously and with

a rather regrettable touch of personality, but no doubt with heavier metal brought to bear and in the spirit of a deeper criticism of life. And then February 1673 saw, in Le Malade Imaginaire, the last and not the least of the triumphs of his peculiar manner. Although desperately ill, he played the title-part several times to the life, playing it on the 17th to the death. Either on the stage or immediately after coming home, he broke a blood-vessel, died, and was buried four days later, at night and with maimed rites, permission for which his widow had, with much effort, obtained from the ecclesiastical authorities.

It remains that we should consider what the 'peculiar manner' just mentioned is. What it is not-as well as some actual features of it open to misconstruction-struck the jealous rivals and the smarting victims of Molière from the very first. infinite has been the writing about him that I should not be surprised to find (though I never actually saw or heard of such a thing) that some one had written something like the following dialogue in one of his own most popular styles. 'Is Molière a strictly original writer?' 'Not at all.' 'Does he not borrow from Plautus, Terence, the Italians, the Spaniards, his French predecessors, Cyrano, Scarron, everybody. in the most barefaced manner?' 'Certainly.' 'Is it not the fact that even the lune toute entière and Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère? and even Mes gages! are not his own inventions?' 'It is most true.' 'Does he respect the decencies of the stricter and nobler comedy?' 'He does not care a scrap about them.' 'Has he any romantic touches?' 'Hardly any.' 'Is his language quite unexceptionable in propriety?' 'Very much the reverse.' 'Is he careful in construction, and does he pay particular attention to probable and neatly adjusted dénouement?' 'He is and does exactly the contrary.' And so it might go on for as many pages as the patterns in his own plays fill.

As to the charges, direct and indirect, of plagiarism, it cannot, at this time of day, be necessary to say much. It is practically acknowledged by all critics whose opinion is of the slightest value that such charges are only valid against bad writers-that the good writer may 'take his property' (in Molière's own attributed and very likely genuine words) where he finds it. But another charge or class of charges, less fully outlined in the above dialogue, requires ampler dealing. From the very first the keen eye of professional jealousy saw that the word to use against Molière was farce. 'Farce' is the critical tarte à la crême. And, as sometimes happens in such cases, the defenders have played into the hands of the attack by exhibiting a sort of nervous 'confession and avoidance' of it. We find, implied or expressed in apologies of Molière ('I didn't know the Bible wanted an apology,' as a king of England whom stupid people call stupid remarked), something like this: 'Well! the Précieuses and the Bourgeois Gentilhomme and M. de Pourceaugnac, and a number of the smaller pieces are rather farcical; but pray do think of Tartuffe and Le Misanthrope!' Theu, exaggerating this nervousness still farther, they try to make of these two masterpieces, if not also of Don Juan, something like tragedies, to throw a tragic air over Molière's whole career, to lament his necessity of writing roaring farces for the city and wishy-washy entertainments for the Court. Nay, one may strongly suspect that

the anxiety about his private life has something of a similar motive.

Now it may go near to be feared shortly that all this is partly due to that old leaven of human nature, Cant, and partly to the less noisome but half-ludicrous and half-pathetic tendency of the same nature to look behind the curtain which is the picture, to 'seek for noon at fourteen hours,' and generally to make a dupe and a gull of itself. Why should it he so difficult to take Molière for what he is-the Master of the Laugh? and so tempting to make him something else-a great poet, a great moralist, a fashioner of terrible tragedies under comic veils? I believe (If I could only put it in his own words!) I could hit pretty well on what his own thoughts in the matter would be, and a famous passage it would make! In the English sense Molière is hardly a 'poet' at all-he had no occasion to be so, though he is an admirable versifier in his own easy way (not easy to do), and the mingled awe and admiration with which the French regard the tricks he plays with the stiff language and prosody of their classic tongue make a very funny mixture. As for his morality, it is practically never bad and seldom if ever careless; but he does not make it his first or his direct object in all cases. And for the tragic or comic turn-it might be well to look into that matter carefully before deciding it. The end of Don Juan is not in the least burlesqued in itself, and it is only dulness that sees burlesque even in Sganarelle's comment on it; but it is part of the donnée-of the material furnished to the author, not by him. If Tartuffe had ended at the point which its first representation reached,-the close of the Third Act (and

there are some reasons for doubting whether the two last were not an afterthought) it would not be much less comic and it would be considerably less tragic. Nor would some people, though they might regret the table scene, weep much for the loss of the end, which is one of Molière's most violent introductions of the Rev ex Machina.

But Le Misanthrope? May it be permitted to doubt whether Molière really intended to excite all the admiring sympathy which has been bestowed on Alceste? Without that sympathy he remains an admirable comic figure, but he becomes hardly more of a tragic one than Malvolio, for whom also some respectable persons have tried to excite it. He is a 'man of honour' no doubt, but he is also, if one may dare to say so, a 'fool of honour,' and not a very amiable one. It is quite evident that wounded vanity, and impatience at not having it all his own wav with Célimène, are quite as much at the bottom of his conduct as virtuous disapproval of the ways of society; his proposal to Éliante after he has as he thinks been jilted by Célimène (in the first, not the second case) is a very bad compliment to her, and doubtfully the act of a gentleman. Although Oronte is an ass-a very delightful ass and one of a numerous tribe-Alceste is both a prig and a boor in his dealings with him: and I really wonder why Acaste and Clitandre, who, though coxcombs, appear to have been 'men of spirit and honour,' did not give their worships the Marshals of France another job for his rudeness. That Molière saw all this, and meant it to be seen, I am perfectly sure. Indeed, one of the best suggestions ever made on this much-discussed play is (it is, I think, M. Despois' in one

of his posthumous notes) that he definitely meant to present Philinte as a mellowed and rationalised Alceste, Alceste as a Philinte who has not got over the first fermentation. At any rate he meant Alceste himself to be laughed at quite as much as to be sympathised with, if not a good deal more. Here I am certain: and in Tartuffe I rather think he originally at least intended to dwell more on the rascality than on the villainy of Tartuffe, and on the folly of Orgon more than on either. To attempt, therefore, to separate the final causes of his work into Pure and Applied Laughter seems to be a mistake; and to attempt further, as the good Riccoboni did, to justify the very 'farces' themselves, and rank them according to their greater or lesser dose of seriousness, seems a greater one, in fact an idle absurdity. One step more, and you come to the seventeenthcentury objection that he had the impudence to write a whole five-act piece, L'Avare, in prose (you might, it seems, write three in it but not five), or the grave protest made some century ago by Auger, the unlucky original of Daudet's L'Immortel, that the dancing of the cooks who bring in the Bourgeois Gentilhomme's supper is improbable. But the part to be allotted to seriousness in his theatre generally is. I admit, a much more difficult question and not to be settled offhand. You must read Molière long, and you must read him not in scraps or separate plays, but continuously, before you really apprehend his essence.

For it is not an essence of style and form, as

1 This spirit of comment has been pushed so far that some
have expressed distress at the conduct of Dorante as being

have expressed distress at the conduct of Dorante as being far from honourable!

Milton's is almost wholly and Dante's to a great extent. It is not an essence of craftsmanship like Dryden's, or Racine's, or, in a lesser way still, Pope's. It is not the power of creating a special less or more limited world of his own, like (in very different ways) the essence of Spenser, or Ariosto, or Balzac, or Dickens. It is not quite-though it comes nearer to these—the power of investing everything with actual life, which belongs to Shakespeare supremely, and to Scott, Thackeray, Fielding, in different ways and degrees. It does not exactly transform everything by passing it through a bath of burlesque irony like Rabelais, or romantic irony like Cervantes, or indignant irony like Swift. It only asks everything which suggests itself 'Can you help me to make men laugh?' and if so, it takes the thing and makes it do this. With the rest it n'a que faire, as the French phrase goes. It has no business for them; they may be excellent things for other artists and other methods, but not for it and for him 1

To this mistress-method Molière was never false, except in the one instance of *Don Garcie de Navarre*, which practically does not count, for he abandoned it soon as a play, he never printed it, and he put it

¹ A very long discussion of a somewhat 'academic' kind, and illustrated from many writers besides Molière, would be necessary to decide the extent to which he is open to the reproach of giving types rather than individual characters. That he does this to some extent is certain, and to some tastes it may seem that it does not always improve his treatment. But it must be remembered that the lighter comic 'humours' admit this emphasising better than more elaborate ones: and that in comedy generally it is more permissible than in 'history' or romantic drama of any sort, tragic or comic.

in the stock-pot for Le Misanthrope, where one may venture to think that it proved itself rather a dangerous ingredient. Elsewhere, I believe, he was always true to it, and it always brought him luck. But it dispensed him from some things which, in other methods, may be justly demanded. Literal originality was one, for if you can get a new laugh out of old jokes, why not? It dispensed him from the formal dénouement, though it may be observed (and it is an interesting comment on Aristotle's dislike and distrust of 'character') that the great charactermongers-Shakespeare sometimes, Scott and Thackeray almost always, Fielding perhaps more than is sometimes allowed-are apt to 'huddle up' their actions. It made him, to some of the grave and precise, distractingly miscellaneous in his choice of means-pantomime, horseplay, philosophical instruments of the Pourceaugnac and Malade Imaginaire type, impossible arabesques of incident and decoration, a whole dream-world of incongruities. It made him shock Boileau 1 (whose admiration for Molière is his best asset, though the limitations of that admiration discount it rather disastrously) and horrify people who were less strong-minded than Boileau. But it carried him through. If it was his mistress he was its master-the Master of the Laugh.

Of course, he saw the pity of it as well as the ¹ A considerable legend used to be built up about the 'quadrilateral' of Mohère, La Fontaine, Racine, and Boileau. There is no doubt that at times, and for a time, they were friends, and some of the individual anecdotes about their friendship may be true. But Racine's misbehaviour to Molière broke the bond, so far as he was concerned, pretty soon, and La Fontaine was La Fontaine. Of the close association of Boileau and Molière there is no doubt.

fun of it; of course, if he had not seen the one he could not have seen the other as he did, and would have been the mere jack-pudding which his enemies would fain have christened him, and which his lessjudicious friends take all sorts of injudicious means to prove that he was not. But to obtrude the pity, or the shame, or the sin, or the moral of any kind, was not his object or his business. The object and the business were to isolate the ludicrum seculi-to put 'the way of the world' in a comic light of eternity. He achieved them. When somebody, hoping to curry favour with Boileau in his morose old age, remarked that Regnard, Molière's successor, was médiocre, the aged Nicolas, to his credit, is said to have growled: 'Il n'est pas médiocrement gai.' It was true, but he would-for all his cavillings at his triend's genial extravagances, at the 'sack of Scapin,' and the profanation of the Aulularia, and the resthave acknowledged that no such qualification would suit the gaiety of Molière himself. It is not only not mediocre: it is supreme. There may be people who have to apologise to themselves for enjoying it by extolling the darker parts of Tartuffe, the more serious ones of the Misanthrope, the ingenious but slightly overdone philosophisings of the Femmes Savantes, and Clitandre's rather too long and rather too earnest snubbings of Trissotin.1 Let this not be

1 Of the identity of this personage—the only individual whom Molière has attacked personally and savagely—with the Abbé Cotin, there is no doubt. One of Trissotin's compositions was actually Cotin's, and the links are strong in other ways. He was undoubtedly a bad poet, and a rather worthless person, and though Boileau's satire on him has all its author's pedantic ill-nature, and Cotin had replied sometimes with force, he had gone out of his way to attack Molière

our way, and while quite appreciating these more serious things, let us prefer, without shame or shuffle. the lovers' quarrels and makings-up of the Dépit Amoureux (reproduced more than once); the Précieuses Ridicules, entire and perfect from rise to drop of curtain; the myriad shapes of bore in Les Fâcheux: the pendant-contrast of Isabelle (who is a minx) and Isidore (who is not) in L'Ecole des Maris and Le Sicilien; the sufferings and humours of the various Sganarelles, including the king of them all, that admirable wood-cutter, whom Molière, taking him from an amusing but ordinary Fabliau, made a person for ever in Le Médecin Malgré Lui. Let us be a little sorry for Arnolphe (for, after all, he behaves like a gentleman to Horace, who does not behave like a gentleman to him), but at the same time feel that he, like Malvolio rather ill-treated, is like Malvolio a thoroughly comic character, and reflect that it is not at all impossible that Agnes (who again is a minx) will avenge him on Master Horace after all. Let us be truly thankful for Moron and the bear (how Shakespeare would have liked them!) in that Princesse d'Élide which so few people trouble themselves about; and recognise, humanely but not sentimentally, that George Dandin 'l'avait voulu'; and rejoice in Don Juan and L'Avare from beginning to end; and think scorn of any one who thinks scorn of M. de Pourceaugnac and Madame d'Escarbagnas. Let us put the Bourgeois Gentilhomme in the very highest place possible for the broader comedy, and delight in the sack which shocked Nicolas Despréaux. Let us

himself. It is much less certain, though the assertion is often as confidently made, that Vadius is Ménage. At any rate he comes off a little better.

welcome Trissotin and Vadius and Armande and Belise and Henriette (Philaminte is a little too odious, and not quite comic enough—we can beat her with Lady Catherine de Burgh). And so let us come to that astonishing 'farce,' as they call it, wherein Molière caught up the sum of his method and uttered it once for all and last of all, with such a triumph of learning, such a prodigality of humour, such a treasury of knowledge of human nature, as have rarely been combined elsewhere, and as almost necessitated the application of the old rhetorical figure of turning out the medal and breaking the mould.

As for the breaking itself one need not say much. Molière was not old: he was almost exactly the age of Shakespeare when he too died-less 'tragically,' as they say, but also with a parcel of work done, such as makes it, though natural, almost absurd to wish for more. As for the 'tragedy,' there was, it may seem to a sober and not too obtuse judgment, little for tears here, little to wail, except in so far as 'the end' is always sad. If God has given you brains, and courage, and the upward countenance; if you have loved; if you have had your day and lived your life, what more do you want? Molière had had and done all this. And as for dying in his vocation, Nelson and he and that saintly hero of Rotrou who elected 'mourir debout et dans son rang,' may possibly appeal together to a tribunal which does not judge according to the standard of the Puritan and the Pharisee.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.



J. B. Poquelin (Moliere.). After Tierre Mignard.

THE BLUNDERER

(L'Étourdi ou les Contre-temps)

L'Étourdi was first played in Lyons, in 1653 or 1655; possibly the later date is correct. It was

played in Paris in November 1658, where it was a great success. Molière's part, of course, was that of Mascarille.

There are references to an edition of 1658, but no copy is known. The title-page of the first extant edition runs as follows: - L'ESTOURDY | ou les | CONTRE-TEMPS | COMEDIE. | REPRESENTÉE SUR

LE | Theatre du Palais Royal. | Par I. B. P. MOLIERE. | A PARIS | Chez GABRIEL QUINET, au | Palais dans la Galerie des Prisonniers, | à l'Ange Gabriel. |

M.DC.LXIII. | AVEC PRIVILEGE DU ROY.

THE BLUNDERER

(L'Étourdi ou les Contre-temps)

A COMEDY

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Lélie, Pandolfe's son.

CÉLIE, Trufaldin's slave.

MASCARILLE, Lélie's valet

HIPPOLYTE, Anselme's daughter.

Anselme, an old man.

TRUFALDIN, an old man.

Pandolfe, an old man.

Léandre, a young mun of gentle birth (fils de famille).

Andrès, supposed to be a gypsy.

ERGASTE, a valet~

A messenger.

Two companies of masqueraders.

The Scene is at Messina.

L'ÉTOURDI OU LES CONTRE-TEMPS

COMÉDIE

ACTE I

Scène Première

LÉLIE

Lén. Hé bien! Léandre, hé bien! il faudra contester: Nous verrons de nous deux qui pourra l'emporter, Qui dans nos soins communs pour ce jeune miracle, Aux vœux de son rival portera plus d'obstacle. Préparez vos efforts, et vous défendez bien, Sûr que de mon côté je n'épargnerai rien.

Scène II

Lélie, Mascarille

Lél. Ah! Mascarille. Mas. Quoi?

Lén. Voici bien des affaires; J'ai dans ma passion toutes choses contraires: Léandre aime Célie, et par un trait fatal, . Malgré mon changement, est toujours mon rival.

THE BLUNDERER

A COMEDY

ACTI

Scene I

LÉLIE

Lél. Very well! Léandre, very well! we will fight the matter out; we shall then see which of us two will prevail and which of us will be most successful in putting obstacles in his rival's way in the courting of this fair maid. Summon your best forces and defend yourself well, for be very sure I shall spare no efforts on my side.

Scene II

LÉLIE, MASCARILLE

Lél. Ah! Mascarille.

Mas. What is it?

Lél. A pretty state of things, indeed; everything is going wrong in my love making: Léandre is in love with Célie, and, as ill-luck will have it, he is still my rival in spite of my change of affection. Mas. Léandre aime Célie!

Lél. Il l'adore, te dis-je.

Mas. Tant pis.

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LÉL. Hé! oui, tant pis, c'est là ce qui m'afflige.
Toutefois j'aurais tort de me désespérer;
Puisque j'ai ton secours, je puis me rassurer:
Je sais que ton esprit, en intrigues fertile,
N'a jamais rien trouvé qui lui fût difficile,
Qu'on te peut appeler le roi des serviteurs,
Et qu'en toute la terre...

Mas. Hé! trêve de douceurs. Quand nous faisons besoin, nous autres misérables, Nous sommes les chéris et les incomparables; Et dans un autre temps, dès le moindre courroux, Nous sommes les coquins, qu'il faut rouer de coups. Lén. Ma foi, tu me fais tort avec cette invective.

Mais enfin discourons un peu de ma captive;
Dis si les plus cruels et plus durs sentiments
Ont rien d'impénétrable à des traits si charmants:
Pour moi, dans ses discours, comme dans son visage,
Je vois pour sa naissance un noble témoignage,
Et je crois que le Ciel dedans un rang si bas
Cache son origine, et ne l'en tire pas.

Mas. Vous êtes romanesque avecque vos chimères. Mais que fera Pandolfe en toutes ces affaires? C'est, Monsieur, votre père, au moins à ce qu'il dit; Vous savez que sa bile assez souvent s'aigrit, Qu'il peste contre vous d'une belle manière, Quand vos déportements lui blessent la visière. Il est avec Anselme en parole pour vous Que de son Hippolyte on vous fera l'époux, S'imaginant que c'est dans le seul mariage Qu'il pourra rencontrer de quoi vous faire sage; Et s'il vient à savoir que, rebutant son choix, D'un objet inconnu vous recevez les lois, Que de ce fol amour la fatale puissance Vous soustrait au devoir de votre obéissance. Dieu sait quelle tempête alors éclatera, Et de quels beaux sermons on vous régalera, Lér. Ah! trêve, je vous prie, à votre rhétorique.

Mas. Léandre in love with Célie!

LÉL. He adores her, I tell you.

Mas. So much the worse.

Lel. Yes, indeed, so much the worse, that is just what troubles me. However, it is wrong of me to despair; since I have you to help me, I ought to take heart again: I know your wit is fertile in intrigue and has never yet met anything too difficult; you are a very king of valets, the like of which the whole earth . . .

Mas. Come! A truce to your sweet speeches. When anybody has need of us poor devils we are called invaluable and made much of; while, at other times, on the least excuse, we are called rascals and well hided.

Lél. Upon my word, you do me wrong But just think of this slave girl; tell me if the most callous and hard-hearted could be proof against such delicious charms. It seems to me that her conversation, as well as her looks, bear eloquent testimony to her birth, and I believe that Heaven conceals her true origin in making her seem of lowly origin.

Mas. How romantic you are with your fancies! But what will Pandolfe say to all this? He is your father, Monsieur, at least he says he is; and you know that when your behaviour offends him he is short-tempered and storms in fine style. He is negotiating for Anselme's daughter Hippolyte, for he imagines that marriage is the only thing to teach you wisdom; and if he hears that, rejecting his choice, you are paying homage to a person about whom nothing is known, that the headstrong character of this silly passion is leading you away from your duty of obedience, Heaven knows what a storm will then burst forth, and with what fine sermons you will be regaled alone.

Lél. Ah! a truce to your sermonising, I pray you.

Mas. Mais vous, trêve plutôt à votre politique:

Elle n'est pas fort bonne, et vous devriez tâcher :... Lél. Sais-tu qu'on n'acquiert rien de bon à me fâcher,

Que chez moi les avis ont de tristes salaires,

Que chez moi les avis ont de tristes salaires, Qu'un valet conseiller y fait mal ses affaires?

Mas. Il se met en courroux! Tout ce que j'en ai dit

N'était rien que pour rire et vous sonder l'esprit: D'un censeur de plaisirs ai-je fort l'encolure,

Et Mascarille est-il ennemi de nature?

Vous savez le contraire, et qu'il est très-certain-

Qu'on ne peut me taxer que d'être trop humain. Moquez-vous des sermons d'un vieux barbon de

père.

Poussez votre bidet, vous dis-je, et laissez faire. Ma foi, j'en suis d'avis, que ces penards chagrins Nous viennent étourdir de leurs contes badins, Et vertueux par force, espèrent par envie Oter aux jeunes gens les plaisirs de la vie! Vous savez mon talent: je m'offre à vous servir.

L'EL. Ah! c'est par ces discours que tu peux me ravir. Au reste, mon amour, quand je l'ai fait paraître, N'a point été mal vu des yeux qui l'ont fait naître; Mais Léandre à l'instant vient de me déclarer

Qu'à me ravir Célie il se va préparer.

C'est pourquoi dépêchons, et cherche dans ta tête Les moyens les plus prompts d'en faire ma conquête;

Trouve ruses, détours, fourbes, inventions, Pour frustrer un rival de ses prétentions.

Mas. Laissez-moi quelque temps rêver à cette affaire.

Que pourrais-je inventer pour ce coup nécessaire?

Lél. Hé bien! le stratagème?

Mas. Ah! comme vous courez! Ma cervelle toujours marche à pas mesurés.

J'ai trouvé votre fait : il faut . . . Non, je m'abuse.

Mais si vous alliez . . . Où?

Mas. C'est une faible ruse.

J'en songeais une.

Lél. Et quelle?

Mas. A truce rather to your goings on; they cannot be very highly commended, and you ought to try.c. Let. Do you not know that nothing is gained by vexing me, that I pay badly for advice and that a preaching valet acts against his own interests?

Mas. He is becoming angry. All I said was only in - joke and to test you. Do I look like a kill-joy. Is Mascarille an enemy to human nature? You know the contrary, and that, truly, the only fault with which I can be taxed is that of being too good-natured. Treat the sermons of your old greybeard of a father as a joke, follow your own way, I tell you, and ignore him. My opinion is that these peevish dotards only bamboozle us with their silly tales; and, virtuous because they cannot help it, out of sheer envy, they seek to prevent young people from enjoying the pleasures of life! You know my talents: I am at your service.

Lél. Ah! that is more the style of talk I like. I will proceed. When I first declared my love, it was not disdained by the girl who inspired it. But Léandre has just warned me that he means to take steps to seduce Célie from me, and that is why we must make haste. Try and devise prompt measures to give me possession of her. Plan ruses, subterfuges, tricks, stratagems, anything to frustrate my rival's desires.

Mas. Give me a little time to think over the matter. What can I devise to mend matters?

LÉL. Well, now! the stratagem?

Mas. Ah! Don't be in such a hurry! My brain always moves slowly. I have it. You must... No, that won't do. But if you went...

LÉL. Where?

Mas. I thought of something, but it was a poor notion.

LÉL. What was it?

MAS. Elle n'irait pas bien.

Mais ne pourriez-vous pas . . . ?

LÉL. Quoi?

MAS. Vous ne pourriez rien.

Parlez avec Anselme.

LÉL. Et que lui puis-je dire?

Mas. Il est vrai, c'est tomber d'un mal dedans un pire. Il faut pourtant l'avoir. Allez chez Trufaldin.

Lél. Que faire?

MAS. Je ne sais.

C'en est trop, à la fin ; Lét. Et tu me mets à bout par ces contes frivoles.

Mas. Monsieur, si vous aviez en main force pistoles, Nous n'aurions pas besoin maintenant de rêver A chercher les biais que nous devons trouver,

Et pourrions, par un prompt achat de cette esclave, Empêcher qu'un rival vous prévienne et vous brave. De ces égyptiens qui la mirent ici

Trufaldin, qui la garde, est en quelque souci; Et trouvant son argent, qu'ils lui font trop-attendre.

Je sais bien qu'il serait très-ravi de la vendre; Car enfin en vrai ladre il a toujours vécu : 1 Il se ferait fesser pour moins d'un quart d'ecu, Et l'argent est le Dieu que surtout il révère : Mais le mal, c'est . . .

Quoi? c'est? Lél.

MAS. Que Monsieur votre père Est un autre vilain qui ne vous laisse pas, Comme vous voudriez bien, manier ses ducats; Qu'il n'est point de ressort qui pour votre ressource Pût faire maintenant ouvrir la moindre bourse. Mais tâchons de parler à Célie un moment. Pour savoir là-dessus quel est son sentiment. La fenêtre est ici.

Lét. Mais Trufaldin pour elle Fait de nuit et de jour exacte sentinelle:

Prends garde.

MAS. Dans ce coin demeurons en repos. Oh bonheur! la voilà qui paraît à propos.

Mas. It would not have done. But could you not . . .?

Lél. What?

Mas. You could not do anything. Talk it over with Anselme.

Lél. What can I say to him?

Mas. True, that would only be to fall from bad to worse. Yet something must be done. Go and see Trufaldin.

LEL. What for?

Mas. I do not know.

LÉL. Really, this is too much; you drive me crazy

with your silly talk.

Mas. Monsieur, if you had but a good sum of money at your disposal we need not cudgel our brains over the means to attain our end, we could buy the slave-girl at once and so forestall the rival who is thwarting you and trying to steal a march on you. Trufaldin, who has charge of the girl, is somewhat uneasy about the gypsies who pawned her to him; for they are keeping him waiting a long time for his money and, when he sees the colour of it, from any source, you may take my word for it that he will be only too delighted to sell her; he has always lived like a miser; money being the god he worships above everything, he would let himself be birched for a few coppers; but the trouble is . . .

Lér. What? what is it?

Mas. Your father is just such another and will not let you handle his ducats as you would like; and I see no means of raising ever so little money just now. But let us try to get a word or two with Célie, to see what she thinks about it. This is her window.

LÉL. Take care, for Trufaldin watches over her by night and day.

Mas. Let us keep in this corner. Oh! what luck!

Here she comes in the nick of time.

Scène III

LÉLIE, CÉLIE, MASCARILLE

Lél. Ah! que le Ciel m'oblige en offrant à ma vue
Les célestes attraits dont vous êtes pourvue!
Et quelque mal cuisant que m'aient causé vos yeux,
Que je prends de plaisir à les voir en ces lieux!
Cril. Mon cœur, qu'avec raison votre discours étonne,
N'entend pas que mes yeux fassent mal à personne;
Et si dans quelque chose ils vous ont outragé,
Je puis vous assurer que c'est sans mon congé.
Lél. Ah! leurs coups sont trop beaux pour me faire

une injure; Je mets toute ma gloire à chérir ma blessure,

Et . . .

Mas. Vous le prenez là d'un ton un peu trop haut:

Ce style maintenant n'est pas ce qu'il nous faut.
Profitons mieux du temps, et sachons vite d'elle
Ce que . . .

TRUF. (dans la maison). Célie!

Mas. Hé bien!

Lél. Oh! rencontre cruelle!

Ce malheureux vieillard devait-il nous troubler? Mas. Allez, retirez-vous, je saurai lui parler.

Scène IV

Trufaldin, Célie, Mascarille et Lélie (retiré dans un coin)

TRUF. (à Célie). Que faites-vous dehors? et quel soin vous talonne,

Vous à qui je défends de parler à personne? Cér. Autrefois j'ai connu cet honnête garçon, Et vous n'avez pas lieu d'en prendre aucun soupçon.

Mas. Est-ce là le seigneur Trufaldin?

Scene III

Lélie, Célie, Mascarille

Lél. Ah! how good Heaven is to me in giving me the sight of your celestial charms. Keen though the suffering be that your beauty has caused me, it overwhelms me with joy to see you here.

Cél. Your words astonish me, and with good reason.

I have no wish to cause harm to any one; and if, in any way, I have done you injury, I assure you it was not intended.

Lér. Ah! the light of your eyes is too lovely to do me hurt; I glory in my wounds, and . . .

Mas. You are much too high-falutin: this is not the style that will help us just now. Let us make better use of our time, and try to find out at once from her what . . .

TRUF. (within the house). Célie!

Mas. There now!

Lúr. Oh! cruel fate! Why must that miserable old man disturb us?

Mas. You go away, I know how to talk to him.

Scene IV

TRUFALDIN, CÉLIE, MASCARILLE AND LÉLIE (hidden in a corner).

Truf. (to Célie). What are you doing out of doors? what are you after? you know I have forbidden you to speak to any one.

Cfr. I knew this worthy young fellow in former days, and you need not have any suspicions on his account.

Mas. Is that Seigneur Trufaldin?

Oui, lui-méme.

CÉL. Mas. Monsieur, je suis tout vôtre, et ma joie est extrême

De pouvoir saluer en toute humilité Un homme dont le nom est partout si vanté.

Truf. Très-humble serviteur.

J'incommode peut-être; Mais je l'ai vue ailleurs, où m'ayant fait connaître Les grands talents qu'elle a pour savoir l'avenir, Je voulais sur un point un peu l'entretenir. Truf. Quoi? te mêlerais-tu d'un peu de diablerie?

CÉL. Non, tout ce que je sais n'est que blanche magie. Mas. Voici donc ce que c'est. Le maître que je sers Languit pour un objet qui le tient dans ses fers. Il aurait bien voulu du feu qui le dévore Pouvoir entretenir la beauté qu'il adore ; Mais un dragon veillant sur ce rare trésor N'a pu, quoi qu'il ait fait, le lui permettre encor, Et ce qui plus le gêne et le rend misérable. Il vient de découvrir un rival redoutable : Si bien que pour savoir si ses soins amoureux Ont sujet d'espérer quelque succès heureux,

Je puis apprendre au vrai le secret qui nous touche. Cér. Sous quel astre ton maître a-t-il reçu le jour? Mas. Sous un astre à jamais ne changer son amour.

Je viens vous consulter, sûr que de votre bouche

Cér. Sans me nommer l'objet pour qui son cœur soupire.

La science que j'ai m'en peut assez instruire. Cette fille a du cœur, et dans l'adversité Elle sait conserver une noble fierté: Elle n'est pas d'humeur à trop faire connaître Les secrets sentiments qu'en son cœur on fait naître:

Mais je les sais comme elle, et d'un esprit plus doux Je vais en peu de mots vous les découvrir tous. Mas. Oh! merveilleux pouvoir de la vertu magique! CÉL. Si ton maître en ce point de constance se pique. CÉL. Yes, it is he.

Mas. Monsieur, I am your humble servant. Great is my delight in having the opportunity to salute, in all humility, a man whose name is everywhere respected.

TRUE. Your humble servant.

Mas. I fear I intrude, but I met her before and, being aware of her great skill in the art of fortunetelling, I wished to consult her on a certain subject.

TRUF. What? Do you meddle with the black art? CÉL. No. I only know something of white magic.

Mas. This is what I want to know. My master languishes for one who has taken possession of his heart. He would fain declare his devouring passion to the fair creature whom he adores; but a dragon guards this rare treasure, and he has not yet been able, try how he will, to attain his object; furthermore, to add to his wretchedness, and make him more anxious, he has just discovered a formidable rival in the field. I have come, therefore, to consult you, to find out whether his passion has any chance of a happy and successful issue, being persuaded that I can learn the truth of this matter from your lips.

CEL. Under what planet was your master born?

MAS. Under a planet that causes his love to be un-

changeable.

Cér. I do not need to be told the name of the person with whom he is in love, my knowledge of hidden things is sufficient to instruct me concerning that. The maiden is high-spirited, and bears herself with courageous pride under adversity; she is not of a disposition to reveal too readily the secret feelings of her heart; but I am as well aware of them as she is, and I am more willing to tell you everything in a very few words.

Mas. Oh! the marvellous power of magic. Cér. If your master is really in earnest in this matter, Et que la vertu seule anime son dessein, Qu'il n'appréhende pas de soupirer en vain: Il a lieu d'espérer, et le fort qu'il veut prendre N'est pas sourd aux traités, et voudra bien se rendre.

Mas. C'est beaucoup, mais ce fort dépend d'un gouverneur

Difficile à gagner.

C'est là tout le malheur.

Mas. Au diable le fâcheux qui toujours nous éclaire.

CÉL. Je vais vous enseigner ce que vous devez faire. LÉL. (lés joignant). Cessez, ô Trufaldin, de vous inquiéter:

C'est par mon ordre seul qu'il vous vient visiter, Et je vous l'envoyais, ce serviteur fidèle, Vous offrir mon service, et vous parler pour elle, Dont je vous veux dans peu payer la liberté, Pourvu qu'entre nous deux le prix soit arrêté.

Mas. La peste soit la bête!
Tru. Ho! ho! qui d

TRU. Ho! ho! qui des deux croire?

Ce discours au premier est fort contradictoire.

Mas. Mousieur, ce galant homme a le cerveau blessé:

Ne le savez-vous pas?

TRU. Je sais ce que je sai;
J'ai crainte ici dessous de quelque manigance.
Rentrez, et ne prenez jamais cette licence;
Et vous, filous fieffés (ou je me trompe fort),
Mettar pour me jouer ves flitte mieure d'aveced.

Mettez pour me jouer vos flûtes mieux d'accord.

Mas. C'est bien fait; je voudrais qu'encor, sans
flatterie.

Il nous eût d'un bâton chargés de compagnie ; A quoi bon se montrer? et comme un Étourdi Me venir démentir de tout ce que je di?

LÉL. Je pensais faire bien.

Mas. Oui, c'était fort l'entendre.

Mais quoi? cette action ne me doit point surprendre:

Vous êtes si fertile en pareils Contre-temps, Que vos écarts d'esprit n'étonnent plus les gens. and inspired by honest thoughts alone in his design, he need not fear that he will sigh in vain: there is ground for hope; the fortress he desires to take will not turn a deaf ear to his overtures, but is quite willing to yield itself up to him.

Mas. That is much, but the fortress is held by a

governor difficult to win over.

CÉL. That is the whole trouble.

Mas. Deuce take the tiresome fellow, he is spying upon us the whole time.

CÉL. I will instruct you what you must do.

Lél. (joining them). You need no longer be uneasy, O Trufaldin; this faithful servant came to visit you solely by my orders. I sent him to offer you my compliments, and to speak to you concerning this young lady, whose freedom I wish to purchase from you in a very short time, provided we can come to terms as to her price.

Mas. Plague take the foo!!

Tau. Ho! ho! which of these two am I to believe? This story entirely contradicts the first.

Mas. Monsieur, you must know that this good fellow

is not quite right in the head.

TRU. I know what I know; I fear some underhand, dealings beneath all this. Go in, and never again take such a liberty. And you two arrant scoundrels (or I am much mistaken), tune your fiddles more in harmony if you want to impose on me.

Mas. Just what one might have expected; I only wish he had thrashed us both, without more ado. What was the good of your showing yourself? Why did you come like the Blunderer you are and give the lie to all I had said?

LEL. I meant it for the best.

Mas. Yes, of course you did, but there—I need not have been surprised at your action. You are so excellent a Marplot that people have ceased to be surprised at your goings-on.

Lél. Ah! mon Dieu, pour un rien me voilà bien

coupable!

Le mal est-il si grand qu'il soit irréparable? Enfin, si tu ne mets Célie entre mes mains, Songe au moins de Léandre à rompre les desseins, Qu'il ne puisse acheter avant moi cette belle. De peur que ma présence encor soit criminelle, Je te laisse.

Mas. Fort bien. A vrai dire, l'argent Serait dans notre affaire un sûr et fort agent ; Mais ce ressort manquant, il faut user d'un autre.

SCÈNE V

Anselme, Mascarille

Ans. Par mon chef, c'est un siècle étrange que le nôtre!

J'en suis confus: jamais tant d'amour pour le bien, Et jamais tant de peine à retirer le sien.
Les dettes aujourd'hui, quelque soin qu'on emploie, sont comme les enfants que l'on conçoit en joie, Et dont avecque peine on fait l'accouchement. L'argent dans une bourse entre agréablement; Mais le terme venu que nous devons le rendre, C'est lors que les douleurs commencent à nous prendre.

Baste, ce n'est pas peu que deux mille francs dus Depuis deux ans entiers me soient enfin rendus; Encore est-ce un bonheur.

Mas. O Dieu! la belle proie A tirer en volant! chut: il faut que je voie Si je pourrais un peu de près le caresser. . Je sais bien les discours dont il le faut bercer. Je viens de voir, Anselme . . .

Ans. Et qui?

Mas. Votre Nérine.

LÉL. Ah! Heavens, what a fuss about nothing! Is the damage so serious as to be irreparable? Meantime, if you cannot aid me to get possession of Célie, at least plan how to spoil Léandre's schemes, and prevent him from buying her before I do. I will leave you, for fear I should upset your schemes again.

Mas., Very good. To tell you the truth, money would be the surest and strongest agent in this business; but, failing that means, we must have recourse to some other.

Scene V

Anselme, Mascarille

Ans. Upon my word, the age is out of joint! I am ashamed of it: never was there such love of wealth or more difficulty in getting one's own. Debts, now-a-days, no matter what trouble one takes, are like the children we conceive in joy but bring forth in pain. Money in one's purse is a very pleasant thing; but the time comes when we must give it up, and then we feel the pangs of labour take hold of us. Enough, it is something that I have just got back the two thousand francs which have been owing to me for two whole years.

Mas. My goodness! this is fine game to shoot on the wing! Hush: I must see if I can wheedle him a bit. I know how to rock his cradle. Anselme, I have just seen . . .

Ans. Who? Mas. Your Nérine. Ans. Que dit-elle de moi, cette gente assassine?

Mas. Pour vous elle est de flamme.

Ans. Elle

Mas. Et vous aime tant,

Que c'est grande pitié.

Ans. Que tu me rends content!

Mas. Peu s'en faut que d'amour la pauvrette ne meure :

'Anselme, mon mignon, crie-t-elle à toute heure, Quand est-ce que l'hymen unira nos deux cœurs, Et que tu daigneras éteindre mes ardeurs?'

Ass. Mais pourquoi jusqu'ici me les avoir celées?

Les filles, par ma foi, sont bien dissimulées!

Mascarille, en effet, qu'en dis-tu? quoique vieux,

J'ai de la mine encore assez pour plaire aux yeux.

Mas. Oui, vraiment, ce visage est encor fort mettable;

S'il n'est pas des plus beaux, il est desagréable.

Ans. Si bien donc . . .

Mas. Si bien donc qu'elle est sotte de vous, Ne vous regarde plus . . .

Ans. Quoi?

Mas. Que comme un époux

Et vous veut . . .

Ans. Et me veut . . . ?

Mas. Et vous veut, quoi qu'il tienne,

Prendre la bourse.
Ans. La . . . ?

Mas. La bouche avec la sienne.

Ans. Ah! je t'entends. Viens çà: lorsque tu la verras,

Vante-lui mon mérite autant que tu pourras.

Mas. Laissez-moi faire.

Ans. Adieu.

Mas. Que le Ciel te conduise!

Ans. Ah! vraiment je faisais une étrange sottise, Et tu pouvais pour toi m'accuser de froideur: Je t'engage à servir mon amoureuse ardeur. Ans. What does the pretty little heartbreaker say of me?

Mas. She is crazy after you.

Ans. She?

Mas. And loves you so much it is sad to see her.

Ans. How happy you make me!

Mas. The poor little thing is almost dying of love: 'Anselme, my darling,' she keeps on crying, 'when will marriage unite our two hearts; when will you deign to quench my passionate longings?'

Ans. But why has she hidden this from me until now? Truly girls are great hypocrites! Well, Mascarille, what do you say to it? Although I am old I still am good-looking enough to please some eyes.

Mas. Yes, indeed, your face is still very presentable; if it is not one of the handsomest it is (dis)agreeable enough. 1

Ans. So that . .

Mas. So that she dotes on you, and regards you no longer . . .

Ans. What?

Mas. But as a husband, and desires . . .

Ans. Desires . . .?

Mas. Desires, no matter what it costs, to steal a (purse). 1

Ans. What . . .?

Mas. A kiss from your lips.

Ans. Ah! I understand. Come now: when you see her, sing my praises as much as you can.

Mas. Trust me for that.

Ans. Adieu.

Mas. May Heaven direct you!

Ans. Stay! I am forgetting myself, and you would have had cause to accuse me of ingratitude: I ask you to further my ardent passion, I receive good

1 See notes.

Je reçois par ta bouche une bonne nouvelle, Sans du moindre présent récompenser ton zèle. Tiens, tu te souviendras . . .

Mas. Ah! non pas, s'il vous plaît.

Ans. Laisse-moi.

Mas. Point du tout, j'agis sans intérêt.

Ans. Je le sais, mais pourtant . . .

Mas. Non, Anselme, vous dis-je: Je suis homme d'honneur, cela me désoblige.

Ans. Adieu donc, Mascarille.

Mas. O long discours!

Régaler par tes mains cet objet de mes vœux; Et je vais te donner de quoi faire pour elle L'achat de quelque bague, ou telle bagatelle Que tu trouveras bon.

Mas. Non, laissez votre argent; Sans vous mettre en souci, je ferai le présent, Et l'on m'a mis en main une bague à la mode,

Qu'après vous payerez si cela l'accommode. Ans. Soit, donne-la pour moi; mais surtout fais si

bien, Qu'elle garde toujours l'ardeur de me voir sien.

SCÈNE VI

LÉLIE, ANSELME, MASCARILLE

Lél. A qui la bourse?

Ans. Ah! Dieux! elle m'était tombée,
Et j'aurais après cru qu'on me l'eût dérobée,
Je vous suis bien tenu de ce soin obligeant,
Qui m'épargne un grand trouble, et me rend mon
arrent:

Je vais m'en décharger au logis tout à l'heure. Mas. C'est être officieux, et très-fort, ou je meure!

LÉL. Ma foi, sans moi, l'argent était perdu pour lui.

news from you, and yet I have not given you the least present to reward you for your zeal. Here, you will remember . . .

Mas. Ah! no, please don't.

Ans. Allow me.

Mas. Nothing of the kind, I do not serve for lucre.

Ans. I know that, but, nevertheless . . .

Mas. No, Anselme, I tell you: I am a man of honour and this offends me.

Ans. Adieu, then, Mascarille.

Mas. Oh what a prater!

Ans. I should like you to take some gift to delight my lady-love; I will give you money to buy a ring or any other trinket you may think suitable.

Mas. No, keep your money; I will make ner the present without troubling you. I have just had a fashionable ring handed to me for which you may pay me later if it fits her.

Ans. Be it so, give it her from me; but be sure you manage to keep her in the mood to make me hers.

Scene VI

LÉLIE, ANSELME, MASCARILLE

LÉL. Whose purse is this?

Ans. Good Heavens! I must have dropped it. I should have thought some one had robbed me of it. I am extremely obliged to you for your kindness, which has saved me much vexation and restored me my money. I will go home at once and get rid of it.

Mas. Confound it all, how officious you are, how extremely officious!

Let. But he would have lost the money if it had not been for me.

Mas. Certes, vous faites rage, et payez aujourd'hui D'un jugement très-rare, et d'un bonheur extrême: Nous avancerons fort, continuez de même.

Lél. Qu'est-ce donc? qu'ai-je fait?

Mas. Le sot, en bon françois,
Puisque je puis le dire, et qu'enfin je le dois.
Il sait bien l'impuissance où son père le laisse,
Qu'un rival qu'il doit craindre étrangement nous
presse:

Cependant, quand je tente un coup pour l'obliger, Dont je cours, moi tout seul, la honte et le danger . . .

Lér. Quoi? c'était . . .?

Mas. Oui, bourreau, c'était pour la captive, Que j'attrapais l'argent dont votre soin nous prive. Lér. S'il est ainsi, j'ai tort; mais qui l'eût deviné?

Mas. Il fallait, en effet, être bien raffiné. Lél. Tu me devais par signe avertir de l'affaire.

Mas. Oui, je devais au dos avoir mon luminaire; Au nom de Jupiter, laissez-nous en repos, Et ne nous chantez plus d'impertinents propos. Un autre après cela quitterait tout peut-être; Mais j'avais médité tantôt un coup de maître, Dont tout présentement je veux voir les effets, A la charge que si . . .

Lél. Non, je te le promets, De ne me mêler plus de rien dire ou rien faire. Mas. Allez donc, votre vue excite ma colère.

Lén. Mais surtout hâte-toi, de peur qu'en ce dessein . . .

Mas. Allez, encore un coup, j'y vais mettre la main. Menons bien ce projet; la fourbe sera fine, S'il faut qu'elle succède ainsi que j'imagine. Allons voir . . . Bon, voici mon homme justement. Mas. Assuredly, you do wonders; you have shown proof of rare good judgment to-day, and have been extremely lucky: if you go on like this we shall prosper exceedingly.

LEL. What do you mean? What have I done?

Mas. Well, since I am to speak out and ought to do so, without mincing my language, you have played the fool. You know well enough how penniless your father keeps you, that we are hard pressed by a formidable rival: and yet, when I attempt a bold stroke to aid you, when I alone incur all the shame and the danger . . .

Lér. What? Was it . . .?

Mas. Yes, idiot, it was for the slave that I seized the money of which you took pains to deprive us.

Lér. In that case, I made a mistake; but who could have guessed it?

Mas. It did require a little sharpness of wit.

Ler. You should have made me a sign to warn me about it.

Mas. Yes, I ought to have eyes in the back of my head; in the name of Heaven leave me alone, and do not babble any more silly suggestions. Any other man than myself would have chucked up the whole thing after what you have done; but I have just thought of a master-stroke, which I will put into effect at once, if only . . .

Let. No, I promise you not to meddle any more

either by word or deed.

Mas. Off with you then, the sight of you makes me wild.

Lex. But be quick, whatever happens, for fear this business . . .

Mas. Once more, will you go? I will set to work at once. I must handle this project carefully; it will be a fine piece of trickery if it succeeds as I think it will. Let us see . . . Good, here comes the very man I want.

Scène VII

PANDOLFE, MASCARILLE

Pan. Mascarille.

Mas. Monsieur?

PAN. A parler franchement,

Je suis mal satisfait de mon fils.

Mas. De mon maître?

Vous n'êtes pas le seul qui se plaigne de l'être: Sa mauvaise conduite, insupportable en tout, Met à chaque moment ma patience à bout.

Pan. Je vous croyais pourtant assez d'intelligence Ensemble.

Mas. Moi? Monsieur, perdez cette croyance:
Toujours de son devoir je tâche à l'avertir;
Et l'on nous voit sans cesse avoir maille à partir.
A l'heure même encor nous avons eu querelle
Sur l'hymen d'Hippolyte, où je le vois rebelle,
Où par l'indignité d'un refus criminel,

Je le vois offenser le respect paternel.

Pan. Querelle?

Mas. Oui, querelle, et bien avant poussée. Pan. Je me trompais donc bien; car j'avais la pensée Qu'à tout ce qu'il faisait tu donnais de l'appui.

Mas. Moi! Voyez ce que c'est que du monde aujourd'hui.

Et comme l'innocence est toujours opprimée. Si mon intégrité vous était confirmée, Je suis auprès de lui gagé pour serviteur, Vous me voudriez encor payer pour précepteur. Oui, vous ne pourriez pas lui dire davantage Que ce que je lui dis pour le faire être sage. 'Monsieur, au nom de Dieu, lui fais-je assez souvent,

Cessez de vous laisser conduire au premier vent, Réglez-vous. Regardez l'honnête homme de père Que vous avez du Ciel, comme on le considère ! Cessez de lui vouloir donner la mort au cœur, Et comme lui vivez en personne d'honneur.'

Scene VII

PANDOLFE, MASCARILLE

PAN. Mascarille.

Mas. Monsieur?

PAN. To tell you the truth, I am far from satisfied

with my son.

Mas. With my master? You are not the only one who makes that complaint: his bad conduct is quite insupportable, it tries my patience beyond bearing every hour of the day.

PAN. But I thought you two understood one another

thoroughly.

Mas. I! Monsieur, do not believe it: I am everlastingly trying to remind him of his duty. We are for ever at loggerheads. Only this very hour have we been quarrelling over the marriage with Hippolyte, for I can see he rebels against it and, by his shameful disobedience, he outrages the respect due to his father.

Pan. A quarrel?

Mas. Yes, and a very serious one it was.

PAN. Then I must indeed be deceived; for I thought

you encouraged him in all he did.

Mas. I! Just think what the world has come to nowa-days, and how innocence is always oppressed! If
you could but be convinced of my integrity you
would give me the wages of a tutor instead of only
those of a servant. Indeed, you could not say more
to him yourself than I do when I am trying to make
him sensible. 'Monsieur, for Heaven's sake,' I constantly say to him, 'cease to be driven about by every
wind that blows, keep yourself under control. Look
at the example Heaven has set before you in your
worthy father, whom everybody respects to for bear
wounding him to the heart, and live an hononrable
life as he does.'

Pan. C'est parler comme il faut. Et que peut-il

répondre? Mas. Répondre? Des chansons, dont il me vient confondre.

Ce n'est pas qu'en effet, dans le fond de son cœur, Il ne tienne de vous des semences d'honneur; Mais sa raison n'est pas maintenant la maîtresse. Si je pouvais parler avecque hardiesse,

Vous le verriez dans peu soumis sans nul effort.

Pan. Parle.

Mas. C'est un secret qui m'importerait fort, S'il était découvert; mais à votre prudence Je puis le confer avec toute assurance.

Pan. Tu dis bien.

Mas. Sachez donc que vos vœux sont trahis Par l'amour qu'une esclave imprime à votre fils. Pan. On m'en avait parlé; mais l'action me touche, De voir que je l'apprenne encore par ta bouche. Mas. Vous voyez si je suis le secret confident . . .

PAN. Vraiment, je suis ravi de cela.

Cependant

A son devoir, sans bruit, desirez-vous le rendre? Il faut . . . (j'ai toujours peur qu'on nous vienne surprendre:

Ce serait fait de moi s'il savait ce discours),
Il faut, dis-je, pour rompre à toute chose cours,
Acheter sourdement l'esclave idolâtrée,
Et la faire passer en une autre contrée.
Anselme a grand accès auprès de Trufaldin:
Qu'il aille l'acheter pour vous dès ce matin.
Après, si vous voulez en mes mains la remettre,
Je connais des marchands, et puis bien vous promettre

D'en retirer l'argent qu'elle pourra coûter, Et malgré votre fils de la faire écarter. Car enfin, si l'on veut qu'à l'hymen il se range, A cette amour naissante il faut donner le change; Et de plus, quand bien même il serait résolu, Qu'il aurait pris le joug que vous avez voulu, PAN. You spoke properly. And what did he reply?

Mas. Reply? Why, with all sorts of nonsense to put me off the scent. At the bottom of his heart there are really the seeds of honour which he inherits from you; but reason is not, at the present moment, his mistress. If I may speak frankly, you would soon see him submissive without much bother.

PAN. Speak out.

Mas. It is a secret which, were it discovered, would cost me dear; but I can quite safely rely upon your discretion.

PAN. Well said.

Mas. Know then that your schemes are sacrificed to the love inspired in your son by a slave-girl.

Pan. I have heard this before; but it is brought home to me, now that I learn it from your lips as well.

Mas. Now you can judge whether I am the secret confidant . . .

PAN. Indeed, I am delighted to hear it.

Mas. Meanwhile if you wish to recall him to his duty without a fuss you must . . . (I am afraid all the time that some one may overhear us: it would be the end of me if he knew what I am saying) you must, I repeat, in order to put an end to all this. secretly buy this idolised slave-girl, and send her into another country. Anselme has free access to Trufaldin: let him go and buy her on your account this morning. Afterwards, if you will put her in my hands, as I know several merchants, I can safely promise to sell her again for what she cost you, and get rid of her in spite of your son. For, if we wish to dispose him to matrimony, we must first divert this budding passion; furthermore, however much he may wish to submit to you, the mere presence of this slave girl fans his passion and makes him averse from marriage.

Cet autre objet, pouvant réveiller son caprice, Au mariage encor peut porter préjudice. Pan. C'est très-bien raisonné; ce conseil me plaît fort

Je vois Anselme; va, je m'en vais faire effort
Pour avoir promptement cette esclave funeste,
Et la mettre en tes mains pour achever le reste.
Mas. Bon, allons avertir mon maître de ceci.
Vive la fourberie, et les fourbes aussi!

Scène VIII

HIPPOLYTE, MASCARILLE

Hrp. Oui, traître? c'est ainsi que tu me rends service?

Je viens de tout entendre et voir ton artifice: A moins que de cela, l'eussé-je soupçonné? Tu couches d'imposture, et tu m'en as donné! Tu m'avais promis, lâche, et j'avais lieu d'attendre Qu'on te verrait servir mes ardeurs pour Léandre, Que du choix de Lélie, où l'on veut m'obliger, Ton adresse et tes soins sauraient me dégager, Que tu m'affranchirais du projet de mon père; Et cependant ici tu fais tout le contraire. Mais tu t'abuseras: je sais un sûr moyen Pour rompre cet achat où tu pousses si bien; Et je vais de ce pas . . .

Mas. Ah! que vous êtes prompte!
La mouche tout d'un coup à la tête vous monte;
Et sans considérer s'il a raison ou non,
Votre esprit contre moi fait le petit démon.
J'ai tort, et je devrais, sans finir mon ouvrage,
Vous faire dire vrai, puisqu'ainsi l'on m'outrage.
Hip. Par quelle illusion penses-tu m'éblouir?
Traître, peux-tu nier ce que je viens d'ouir?

Pan. Sensibly spoken; your advice greatly pleases me. I see Anselme; go, I will strain every nerve to get hold of this wretched slave-girl and then you can dispose of her afterwards.

Mas. Good. Now I will go and warn my master of all this. Long live knaves and knavery!

Scene VIII

HIPPOLYTE, MASCARILLE

HIP. So, traitor, this is how you serve me? I have just overheard everything and seen through your tricks: unless I had heard with my own ears I should not have suspected you of it. You revel in imposture and you have basely deceived me! You promised me, you villain, that you would serve me in my love for Léandre—and I had a right to expect that you would keep your word-that your skill and cleverness would find a way of escape from the choice of Lélie, to which they seek to compel me, and that you would liberate me from my father's scheme; and here I find you doing just the opposite. But you will find out your mistake: I know a sure means of preventing this purchase you have arranged so well, and I will go at once . . .

Mas. Ah! how hasty you are! you fly into a passion all in a flash; and, without pausing to consider whether you are right or wrong, you rage at me like a little demon. I ought to make your accusation true and not finish my undertaking, since this is how I am insulted.

Hip. With what sophistry, you traitor, do you think to blind me? Can you deny what I have just heard?

Mas. Non, mais il faut savoir que tout cet artifice
Ne va directement qu'à vous rendre service;
Que ce conseil adroit, qui semble être sans fard,
Jette dans le panneau l'un et l'autre vieillard;
Que mon soin par leurs mains ne veut avoir Célie
Qu'à dessein de la mettre au pouvoir de Lélie,
Et faire que l'effet de cette invention
Dans le dernier excès portant sa passion,
Anselme, rebuté de son prétendu gendre,
Puisse tourner son choix du côté de Léandre.
Hip. Quoi? tout ce grand projet qui m'a mise en
courroux,

Tu l'as formé pour moi, Mascarille?

Mas. Oui, pour vous;
Mais puisqu'on reconnaît mal mes bons offices,
Qu'il me faut de la sorte essuyer vos caprices,
Et que pour récompense on s'en vient de hauteur
Me traiter de faquin, de lâche, d'imposteur,
Je m'en vais réparer l'erreur que j'ai commise,
Et dès ce même pas rompre mon entreprise.
Hrp. (l'arrêtant). Hé! ne me traite pas si rigoureusement.

Et pardonne aux transports d'un premier mouve-

Mas. Non, non, laissez-moi faire, il est en ma puissance

De détourner le coup qui si fort vous offense. Vous ne vous plaindrez point de mes soins désormais:

Oui, vous aurez mon maître, et je vous le promets. Hrp. Hé! mon pauvre garçon, que ta colère cesse: J'ai mal jugé de toi, j'ai tort, je le confesse; (Tirant sa bourse.)

Mais je veux réparer ma faute avec ceci.
Pourrais-tu te résoudre à me quitter ainsi?
Mas. Non, je ne le saurais, quelque effort que je fasse,
Mais votre promptitude est de mauvaise grâce.
Apprenez qu'il n'est rien qui blesse un noble cœur
Comme quand il peut voir qu'on le touche en
l'honneur.

- Mas. No, but you should know that all this scheming is directed entirely towards serving your cause; that this clever advice, which appears so straightforward, will draw both the old men into the snare; that the pains I have taken to get hold of Célie, by means of them, was on purpose to hand her over to Lélie, in order that Anselme, furious at being deprived of his promised son-in-law, might turn his choice upon Léandre.
- Hip. What? Then this great project, which has made me so angry, was on my account, Mascarille?
- Mas. Yes, it was for you; but, since my good offices are so badly received, since I must thus bear your caprices and, for reward, be treated haughtily as a scoundrel, a villain, an impostor, I will repair the error I have committed and break off my enterprise at once.
- Hip. (stopping him). Ah! do not be so severe with me, please pardon my hasty passion.
- Mas. No, no, let me go, I can quite easily undo what has so greatly offended you. You shall never again have reason to complain of my schemes. Yes, you shall have my master, I promise you.
- Hip. Oh! my dear fellow, do stop being angry. I have misjudged you, I was wrong, I confess it; (drawing forth her purse) but I am willing thus to atone for my fault. Can you really leave me like this?
- Mas. No, I cannot, no matter how I try; but your hastiness is hard to bear. Remember that nothing wounds a noble mind so much as imputations on its honour.

Hip. Il est vrai, je t'ai dit de trop grosses injures;
 Mais que ces deux louis guérissent tes blessures.
 Mas. Hé! tout cela n'est rien: je suis tendre à ces coups:

Mais đéjá je commence à perdre mon courroux : Il faut de ses amis endurer quelque chose.

Hip. Pourras-tu mettre à fin ce que je me propose,
Et crois-tu que l'effet de tes desseins hardis
Produise à mon amour le succès que tu dis?
Mas. N'ayez point pour ce fait l'esprit sur des épines;
J'ai des ressorts tout prêts pour diverses machines;
Et quand ce stratagème à nos vœux manquerait,
Ce qu'il ne ferait pas, un autre le ferait.
Hip. Crois qu'Hippolyte au moins ne sera pas ingrate.

Mas. L'espérance du gain n'est pas ce qui me flatte. Hip. Ton maître te fait signe, et veut parler à toi: Je te quitte; mais songe à bien agir pour moi.

Scène IX

Mascarille, Lélie

Lér. Que diable fais-tu là? Tu me promets merveille;
Mais ta lenteur d'agir est pour moi sans pareille.
Sans que mon bon génie au-devant m'a poussé,
Déjà tout mon bonheur eût été renversé:
C'étaitrfait de mon bien, c'était fait de ma joie;
D'un regret éternel je devenais la proie:
Bref, si je ne me fusse en ce lieu rencontré,
Anselme avait l'esclave, et j'en étais frustré:
Il l'emmenait chez lui; mais j'ai paré l'atteinte,
J'ai détourné le coup, et tant fait, que par crainte
Le pauvre Trufaldin l'a retenue.

Mas. Et trois : Quand nous serons à dix, nous ferons une croix. C'était par mon adresse, ô cervelle incurable! Hip. It is true I insulted you grossly, but let these two louis heal your wounds.

Mas. Oh! it is nothing: I am sensitive on these points; but my anger is already beginning to cool: we must put up with the failings of our friends.

HIP. Can you bring about the end I desire? do you really think your bold designs will bring my love suit to a successful issue?

Mas. Do not be uneasy about that; I have means ready for all kinds of stratagems; and, if this plot fails to bring about what we wish, another will accomplish it.

HIP. You may, at any rate, be sure that Hippolyte will not be ungrateful.

Mas. Hope of gain does not influence me.

Hip. Your master is beckening to you: he wants to speak to you: I will leave you; but remember to do your best for me.

Scene IX

Mascarille, Lélie

Lél. What in the world are you doing there? You promise me wonders, but your slowness in performance is unparalleled! Had not my good angel forewarned me, all my happiness and hopes of joy would, by now, be at an end! I should have become a prey to eternal misery. In short, had I not been on the spot at the right moment, Anselme would have got possession of the slave-girl and I should have been baulked: he was just carrying her off to his house; but I parried the attack, warded off the blow and terrified poor Trufaldin to such an extent that he has kept the girl.

Mas. This makes three: we will call it a red-letter day when the score reaches ten. You brainless idiot! it was by my scheming that Anselme under-

Qu'Anselme entreprenait cet achat favorable. Entre mes propres mains on la devait livrer, Et vos soins endiablés nous en viennent sevrer; Et puis pour votre amour je m'emploîrais encore? D'aimerais mieux cent fois être grosse pécore, Devenir cruche, chou, lanterne, loup-garou, Et que Monsieur Satan vous vint tordre le cou.

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Lél. Il nous le faut mener en quelque hôtellerie, Et faire sur les pots décharger sa furie.

FIN DU PREMIER ACTE

ACTE II

Scène Première

Mascarille, Lélie

Mas. A vos desirs enfin il a fallu se rendre: Malgré tous mes serments je n'ai pu m'en défendre, Et pour vos intérêts, que je voulais laisser, En de nouveaux périls viens de m'embarrasser. Je suis ainsi facile, et si de Mascarille Madame la Nature avait fait une fille. Je vous laisse à penser ce que c'aurait été. Toutefois n'allez pas sur cette sûreté Donner de vos revers au projet que je tente, Me faire une bévue, et rompre mon attente. Auprès d'Anselme encor nous vous excuserons, Pour en pouvoir tirer ce que nous desirons ; Mais si dorénavant votre imprudence éclate, Adieu vous dis mes soins pour l'objet qui vous flatte. Lél. Non, je serai prudent, te dis-je, ne crains rien : Tu verras seulement . .

Mas. Souvenez-vous-en bien : J'ai commencé pour vous un hardi stratagème :

took to buy the girl. It would have helped us greatly. She was going to be delivered up to me, and now your cursed interference has sent us adrift again. What is the use of my making any further attempts to help on your love affair? I would rather a hundred times be looked on as a clumsy lout, a juggins, a softy, an idiot and a blockhead, and see you at the Devil.

Lel. I must take him to an inn and let him work off

his anger in his cups.

END OF THE FIRST ACT

ACT II

Scene I

Mascarille, Lélie

Mas. Well, I must yield again to your entreaties, in spite of all my oaths to the contrary, and, instead of thinking no longer of your interests, I must run fresh risks. I am too compliant. If Dame Nature had made a girl of Mascarille, I leave you to guess what she would have become. At the same time, do not build too much on my promise, or set about frustrating whatever scheme I try. Don't come blundering in to wreck my schemes. I will make excuses for you to Anselme in order to get what we want out of him; but should there be any more outbursts of indiscretion; henceforth, on your part, then good-bye, say I, to helping you to gain the object you have set your heart on.

LEL. No, I will be careful, I tell you, do not be

afraid: you shall just see . . .

Mas. Mind you keep your word, then: I have undertaken a bold stratagem for your sake: your father Votre père fait voir une paresse extrême
A rendre par sa mort tous vos desirs contents;
Je viens de le tuer, de parole, j'entends:
Je fais courir le bruit que d'une apoplexie
Le bonhomme surpris a quitté cette vie.
Mais avant, pour pouvoir mieux feindre ce trépas,
J'ai fait que vers sa grange il a porté ses pas:
On est venu lui dire, et par mon artifice,
Que les ouvriers qui sont après son édifice,
Parmi les fondements qu'ils en jettent encor,
Avaient fait par hasard rencontre d'un trésor;
Il a volé d'abord, et comme à la campagne
Tout son monde à présent, hors nous deux, l'accompagne,

Dans l'esprit d'un chacun je le tue aujourd'hui,
Et produis un fantôme enseveli pour lui.
Enfin je vous ai dit à quoi je vous engage:
Jouez bien votre rôle; et pour mon personnage,
Si vous apercevez que j'y manque d'un mot,
Dites absolument que je ne suis qu'un sot.
Lél. (seul). Son esprit, il est vrai, trouve une étrange

voie

Pour adresser mes vœux-au comble de leur joie; Mais quand d'un-bel objet on est bien amoureux, Que ne ferait-on pas pour devenir heureux? Si l'amour est au crime une assez belle excuse, Il en peut bien servir à la petite ruse Que sa flamme aujourd'hui me force d'approuver Par la douceur du bien qui m'en doit arriver. Juste Ciel! qu'ils sont prompts! je les vois en parole:

Allons nous préparer à jouer notre rôle.

Scène II

MASCARILLE, ANSELME

Mas. La nouvelle a sujet de vous surprendre fort. Ans. Etre mort de la sorte!

shows extreme laxity in not smoothing your path by departing this life; and I have just killed him (only in words). I have spread abroad the report that a sudden fit of apoplexy has carried the good man off. But first, to make his death seem an actual fact, I have induced him to go to his farm; I sent a fellow to tell him that the workmen, in digging the foundations of some buildings, had just come across hidden treasure. He flew off at once, and, as all his folks, save ourselves, have gone off with him into the country also, I have killed him to-day in imagination and I will bury an effigy in his place. Now that I have told you what the game is, mind you play your part properly; and, as for mine, if you catch me failing in a single iota, you can tell me to my face that I am nothing but a fool.

Léi. (alone). I must admit that his wits have hit upon an odd plan for bringing about what I ardently wish; but when a man is passionately in love with a beautiful girl, he sticks at nothing to obtain his desires. If love be a sufficient excuse for crime, one may surely make use of a harmless bit of imposture, which my love compels me to employ in order to attain the delights that will result from it. Good Heavens! how quick they are! I see them talking about it: now I must get ready to play my part.

Scene II

Mascarille, Anselme

Mas. The news may indeed surprise you.
Ans. To die like that!

MAS. Il a certes grand tort: Je lui sais mauvais gré d'une telle incartade. Ans. N'avoir pas seulement le temps d'être malade!

Mas. Non, jamais homme n'eut si hâte de mourir, Ans. Et Lélie?

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Il se bat, et ne peut rien souffrir: MAS. Il s'est fait en maints lieux contusion et bosse, Et veut accompagner son papa dans la fosse; Enfin, pour achever, l'excès de son transport M'a fait en grande hâte ensevelir le mort, De peur que cet objet, qui le rend hypocondre, A faire un vilain coup ne me l'allât semondre.

Ans. N'importe, tu devais attendre jusqu'au soir. Outre qu'encore un coup j'aurais voulu le voir, Qui tôt ensevelit bien souvent assassine, . Et tel est cru défunt, qui n'en a que la mine.

Mas. Je vous le garantis trépassé comme il faut. Au reste, pour venir au discours de tantôt, Lélie (et l'action lui sera salutaire) D'un bel enterrement veut régaler son père, Et consoler un peu ce défunt de son sort Par le plaisir de voir faire honneur à sa mort. Il hérite beaucoup; mais comme en ses affaires .Il se trouve assez neuf et ne voit encor guères. Que son bien la plupart n'est point en ces quartiers, Ou que ce qu'il y tient consiste en des papiers, Il voudrait vous prier, ensuite de l'instance, D'excuser de tantôt son trop de violence, De lui prêter au moins pour ce dernier devoir . . . Ans. Tu me l'as déjà dit, et je m'en vais le voir.

Mas. Jusques ici du moins tout va le mieux du monde: Tâchons à ce progrès que le reste réponde, Et de peur de trouver dans le port un écueil, Conduisons le vaisseau de la main et de l'œil.

Mas. It was certainly very wrong of him: I owe him a grudge for such a prank.

Ans. Not even to make sure of time to be ill!

Mas. No, never was a man in such haste to die.

Ans. And Lélie?

Mas. He raves and is beside himself with sorrow: he has beaten and bruised himself black and blue all over and wants to follow his papa into the grave; in fact, to put an end to it, his excessive grief decided me to hurry on the burial of the dead, lest the sight of the corpse, which has turned him melancholy mad, should incite him to commit some fatal act.

Ans. Nevertheless, you should have waited till the evening: for, not only should I have liked to see him once again, but, whoever buries a man too quickly often commits a murder: many a man has been taken for dead who only had the appearance

of being so.

Mas. I warrant you he is as dead as ditch water. But, to return to our previous conversation, Lélie (and the work will do him good) wishes to give his father a splendid funeral, to console the deceased, in some measure, for his fate, by the pleasure of seeing the honour paid him when dead. He inherits large property; but, as he is new to the business, and does not yet understand things, and, as the greater portion of his property lies in other parts of the country, or what he has in hand is in the form of bills, he begs you to forgive him his recent bad conduct, and to lend him at least enough money to defray the costs of this last duty.

Ans. You have already told me that :-I will go and

see him.

Mas. So far, everything has gone as well as possible; we must try to make the rest of the business as satisfactory as the beginning, and, lest we should be shipwrecked in the harbour, steer the vessel carefully.

Scène III

LÉLIE, ANSELME, MASCARILLE

Ans. Sortons, je ne saurais qu'avec douleur très-forte Le voir empaqueté de cette étrange sorte: Las! en si peu de temps! il vivait ce matin! Mas. En peu de temps parfois on fait bien du chemin.

Lél. Ah!

Ans. Mais quoi? cher Lélie, enfin il était homme : On n'a point pour la mort de dispense de Rome. Lér. Ah!

Ans. Sans leur dire gare elle abat les humains, Et contre eux de tout temps a de mauvais desseins. Lél. Ah!

LEL. An

Ans. Ce fier animal, pour toutes les prières, Ne perdrait pas un coup de ses dents meurtrières : Tout le monde y passe.

Lél. Ah!

Mas. Vous avez beau prêcher, Ce deuil enraciné ne se peut arracher.

Ans. Si malgré ces raisons votre ennui persévère, Mon cher Lélie, au moins, faites qu'il se modère.

Lél. Ah!

Mas Il n'en fera rien, je connais son humeur. Ans. Au reste, sur l'avis de votre serviteur, J'apporte ici l'argent qui vous est nécessaire Pour faire célébrer les obsèques d'un père . . . Lén. Ah! ah!

Mas. Comme à ce mot s'augmente sa douleur! Il ne peut sans mourir songer à ce malheur. Ans. Je sais que vous verrez aux papiers du bon-

homme
Que je suis débiteur d'une plus grande somme;
Mais quand par ces raisons je ne vous devrais rien,
Vous pourriez librement disposer de mon bien.
Tenez, je suis tout vôtre, et le ferai paraître.

LEL (s'en allant). Ah!

Scene III

LÉLIE, ANSELME, MASCARILLE

Ans. Come away. It grieves me to the heart to see him wrapped round in this sad manner. Alas! in so short a time! he was alive this morning!

Mas. One can sometimes cover a lot of ground in a short space of time.

Lél. Ah!

Ans. Come, dear Lélie! he was but human: Rome itself cannot grant dispensation from death.

Lél. Ah!

Ans. It scythes down human beings without warning and has ever shown itself callous towards them.

Lél. Ah!

Ans. Cruel foe! it will not forgo one grip of its deadly teeth for all the prayers of mankind. Every one has to pass through its jaws.

Lél. Ah!

Mas. It is no good your preaching; his sorrow is too

deep to be uprooted.

Ans. If, in spite of all these arguments, you still persist in your grief, at least, my dear Lélie, try to moderate it.

Lél. Ah!

Mas. He will do nothing; I know his mood.

Ans. Well, I have taken the hint given me by your servant and brought you the money you will need to celebrate the obsequies of a father . . .

Lel. Ah! ah!

Mas. See how his grief increases at every word, it

nearly kills him to think of his loss.

Ans. You will see by the good man's papers that I am his debtor for a much larger sum of money; but, even if I did not owe you anything, you would be heartily welcome to make use of my purse. Take it: you shall see that I am at your service.

LÉL. (going away). Ah!

Le grand déplaisir que sent Monsieur mon maître!

Ans. Mascarille, je crois qu'il serait à propos

Qu'il me fît de sa main un reçu de deux mots.

Mas. Ah!

Ans. Des événements l'incertitude est grande.

Mas. Ah!

Ans. Faisons-lui signer le mot que je demande. Mas. Las! en l'état qu'il est, comment vous contenter?

Donnez-lui le loisir de se'désattrister :

Et quand ses déplaisirs prendront quelque allé-

geance,

J'aurai soin d'en tirer d'abord votre assurance. Adieu : je sens mon cœur qui se gonfle d'ennui. Et m'en vais tout mon soul pleurer avecque lui! Ah!

Ans. (seul). Le monde est rempli de beaucoup des traverses.

Chaque homme tous les jours en ressent de diverses, Et jamais ici-bas . . .

Scène IV

PANDOLFE, ANSELME

Ans. Ah! bons Dieux! je frémi! Pandolfe qui revient! fût-il bien endormi! Comme depuis sa mort'sa face est amaigrie! Las! ne m'approchez pas de plus près, je vous prie, J'ai trop de répugnance à coudoyer un mort. PAN. D'où peut donc provenir ce bizarre transport? Ans. Dites-moi de bien loin quel sujet vous amène. Si pour me dire adieu vous prenez tant de peine, C'est trop de courtoisie, et véritablement Je me serais passé de votre compliment. Si votre âme est en peine et cherche des prières. Las! je vous en promets, et ne m'effrayez guères: Foi d'homme épouvanté, je vais faire à l'instant

Mas. How unhappy my master is!

Ans. I think, Mascarille, it would be just as well if he were to give me an informal receipt.

Mas. Ah!

Ans. Life is so uncertain.

Mas. Ah!

Ans. Just get him to sign the receipt I want.

Mas. Alas! How can he do what you want him to do in his present state? Give him a little time to get over his grief, and, when his troubles are somewhat alleviated, I will at once take care to obtain a receipt for you. Adieu: my heart is bursting with grief, and I must go and mingle my tears with his! Oh!

Ans. (alone). The world is full of trouble; every one meets it in some form or other, for this is a vale . . .

Scene IV

PANDOLFE, ANSELME

Ans. Ah! ye gods, how I shake! Pandolfe come back to life! Could he not rest! How emaciated his face has grown since his death! Alas! Do not come too near me, I implore you: I shrink from the very idea of touching the dead.

PAN. What can be the cause of this absurd terror?

Ans. Tell me, at a good distance, what brings you here. If you have taken all this trouble just to bid me farewell, it is really unnecessary courtesy on your part and, truly, I could have done without the attention. If your soul is in anguish and stands in need of prayers, alas! you shall have them, but do not terrify me. upon my honour, as

Prier tant Dieu pour vous que vous serez content.
Disparaissez donc, je vous prie;
Et que le Ciel par sa bonté
Comble de joie et de santé
Votre défunte seigneurie!

Pan. (riant). Malgré tout mon dépit, il m'y faut prendre part.

Ans. Las! pour un trépassé vous êtes bien gaillard!

Pan. Est-ce jeu? dites-nous, ou bien si c'est folie, Qui traité de défunt une personne en vie?

Ans. Hélas! vous êtes mort, et je viens de vous voir.

Pan. Quoi? j'aurais trépasse sans m'en apercevoir?

Ans. Sitôt que Mascarille en a dit la nouvelle, J'en ai senti dans l'âme une douleur mortelle. Pan. Mais enfin, dormez-vous? êtes-vous éveillé? Me connaissez-vous pas? Ans. Vous êtes habillé

D'un corps aérien qui contrefait le vôtre,
Mais qui dans un moment peut devenir tout autre.

"Je crains fort de vous voir comme un géant grandir,
Et tout votre visage affreusement laidir.
Pour Dieu, ne prenez point de vilaine figure;
J'ai prou de ma frayeur en cette conjoncture.

Pan. En une autre saison, cette naïveté
Dont vous accompagnez votre crédulité,
Anselme, me serait un charmant badinage,
Et j'en prolongerais le plaisir davantage;
Mais avec cette mort un trésor supposé,
Dont parmi les chemins on m'a désabusé,
Fomente dans mon âme un soupçon légitime:
Mascarille est un fourbe, et fourbe fourbissime,
Sur qui ne peuvent rien la crainte et le remords,
Et qui pour ses desseins a d'étranges ressorts.
Ans. M'aurait-on joué pièce et fait supercherie?

a terrified man, I will go at once and pray to God so ardently on your account that you shall obtain

peace.

Then vanish, I pray thee.

May Heaven bestow

Health and happiness on thee

As erst here below.

Pan. (laughing). I cannot help laughing in spite of my annoyance.

Ans. Upon my word, you are very merry for a dead man!

Pan. Tell me, is this a joke? or are you quite mad? why do you treat a living person as though he were dead?

Ans. Alas! you are dead, I saw you laid out just a minute ago.

Pan. What? How could I be dead without knowing anything about it?

Ans. As soon as Mascarille told me the news, I felt stricken to the heart with grief.

Pan. Come now, are you asleep or are you awake?
Do you not know me?

Ans. You are clothed with a celestial body which looks very much like you, but it could change into some other form in a moment. I am in terror lest you should grow to the dimensions of a giant, and your face turn hideously ugly all over. For the love of Heaven, do not take on a horrible shape, I have had quite enough to frighten me already.

Pan. At another time, Anselme, your simplicity, and the credulity that accompanies it, would have amused me vastly, and I should have wished to prolong the joke; but this belief in my death and the supposed treasure, which I soon found on my journey did not exist, make me strongly suspect that Mascarille is a rogue, the most roguish of rogues, who is stopped neither by fear nor conscience, and who uses any means to gain his ends.

Ans. Have they played tricks and imposed upon me,

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Ah. vraiment, ma raison, vous seriez fort jolie! Touchons un peu pour voir: en effet, c'est bien lui. Malepeste du sot que je suis aujourd'hui!

De grâce, n'allez pas divulguer un tel conte:
On en ferait jouer quelque farce à ma honte.
Mais, Pandolfe, aidez-moi vous-même à retirer
L'argent que j'ai donné pour vous faire enterrer

Pan. De l'argent, dites-vous? ah! c'est donc l'enclouure!

Voilà le nœud secret de toute l'aventure!
A votre dam. Pour moi, sans m'en mettre en souci,
Je vais faire informer de cette affaire-ici
Contre ce Mascarille, et si l'on peut le prendre,
Quoi qu'il puisse coûter, je veux le faire pendre.
Ans. Et moi, la bonne dupe, à trop croire un vaurien,
Il faut donc qu'aujourd'hui je perde et sens et bien?
Il me sied bien, ma foi, de porter tête grise,
Et d'être encore si prompt à faire une sottise,
D'examiner si peu sur un premier rapport . . .!
Mais je vois . . .

Scène V

LÉLIE, ANSELME

Lél. Maintenant, avec ce passe-port, Je puis à Trufaldin rendré aisément visite.

Ans. A ce que je puis voir, votre douleur vous quitte.

Lél-Que dites-vous? jamais elle ne quittera

Un cœur qui chèrement toujours la nourrira.

Ans. Je reviens sur mes pas vous dire avec franchise Que tantôt avec vous j'ai fait une méprise; Que parmi ces louis, quoiqu'ils semblent très-beaux, J'en ai, sans y penser, mêlé que je tiens faux, Et j'apporte sur moi de quoi mettre en leur place. De nos faux-monnayeurs l'insupportable audace Pullule en cet État d'une telle façon, Qu'on ne reçoit plus rien qui soit hors de soupçon: Mon Dieu! qu'on ferait bien de les faire tous pendre!

then? Oh! upon my word, I have been taken in. Aet me just touch him to see: why it is really he. What a plaguey fool I have been to-day! for pity's sake do not let this story get about, they would make up a farce about it to my shame. But, Pandolfe, you must help me to get back the money I lent them to bury you.

Pan. Money, did you say? ah! that is the whole otrouble! There lies the secret of the whole enterprise. So much the worse for you. I shall not rbother much about that, but I shall lay an informa-

Nother much about that, but I shall lay an information at once against this Mascarille, and, if they can get hold of him, cost what it may, I'll make him

hang for it.

Ans. And I, poor foolish dupe, have to lose both my common sense and my money in one day because I let myself believe in a scoundrel. Upon my word, my grey hairs should have brought me more wisdom. To think I should so easily fall into such a stupid error, and be so credulous of mere reports . . .! But I see . . .

Scene V

Lélie, Anselme

Léz. Now, with this as a passport, I can easily pay Trufaldin a visit.

Ans. I am glad to see your grief is abating.

Lél. What is that you say? It will never leave a heart that finds its happiness in continually cherishing its sorrow.

Ans. I came back to tell you frankly that I made a mistake when I was with you just now; among those louis, although they looked so good, I had carelessly mixed some that I fear are false; I have, therefore, brought others to put in their place. The insupportable audacity of false-coiners is increasing to such an extent in this country that one cannot accept any coin now without suspicion. I wish to Heaven we could have them all hanged!

Lér. Vous me faites plaisir de les vouloir reprendre; Mais je n'en ai point vu de faux, comme je croi.

Ans. Je les connaîtrai bien; montrez, montrez-lesmoi:

Est-ce tout?

Lét. Oui.

Ans. Tant mieux. Enfin je vous raccroche, Mon argent bien aimé: rentrez dedans ma poche. Et vous, mon bravé escroc, vous ne tenez plus rien. Vous tuez donc des gens qui'se portent fort bien? Et qu'auriez-vous donc fait sur moi, chétif beaunère?

Ma foi, je m'engendrais d'une belle manière, Et j'allais prendre en vous un beau-fils fort discret! Allez, allez mourir de honte et de regret.

Lél. Il faut dire: 'J'en tiens.' Quelle surprise extrême!

D'où peut-il avoir su sitôt le stratagème?

Scène VI

Mascarille, Lélie

Mas. Quoi? vous étiez sorti? je vous cherchais partout.

Hé bien! en sommes-nous enfin venus à bout? Je le donne en six coups au fourbe le plus brave. 4Cà, donnez-moi que j'aille acheter notre esclave : Votre rival après sera bien étonné.

Lél. Ah! mon pauvre garçon, la chance a bien tourné!

Pourrais-tu de mon sort deviner l'injustice? Mas. Quoi? que serait-ce?

Lél. Anselme, instruit de l'artifice, M'a repris maintenant tout ce qu'il nous prêtait, *Sous couleur de changer de l'or que l'on doutait. Lér. I am much obliged to you for being willing to take them back, but I do not think there were any false coins among them.

Ans. I can recognise them at once; let me see the

money, let me see it: is this all?

Lél. Yes.

Ans. All right. At last I have got hold of my beloved money again: into my pocket you go. As for you, my fine swindler, you shall never see the colour of it again. So you would kill people in the best of health, would you? What, then, would you have done with me, an infirm old father-in-law? Upon my word, I was about to add to my family in a very fine fashion in admitting you as a decent, worthy son-in-law. Go and put an end to yourself for very shame.

Lér. I must admit I am caught. But how extraordinary! how can he have discovered the plot so

soon?

Scene VI

Mascarille, Lélie

Mas. What? So you were out? I have been looking everywhere for you. Well, well! Have we succeeded at last? I will give the cleverest scoundrel six trials to do as much as we have done. ACome, give me the money, and I will go and buy the slave-girl: that will astonish your rival.

Let. Oh! my dear boy, luck has turned against us!
You could never guess what a miserable trick

fortune has played me!

Mas. What? What has happened now?

Lél. Anselme, having discovered our plot, has just got back from me all he lent us, under pretext of changing some doubtful coins.

MAS.

Léz. Quoi . . .?

Mas. Vous vous moquez peut-être? Lét. Il est trop véritable. Mas. Tout de bon? LÉL. Tout de bon; j'en suis inconsolable. Tu te vas emporter d'un courroux sans égal. Mas. Moi, Monsieur? Quelque sot! la colère fait mal; Et je veux me choyer, quoi qu'enfin il arrive: Que Célie après tout soit ou libre ou captive. Que Léandre l'achète ou qu'elle reste là, Pour moi, je m'en soucie autant que de cela. Lér. Ah! n'aie point pour moi si grande indifférence, Et sois plus indulgent à ce peu d'imprudence. 'Sans ce dernier malheur, ne m'avoueras-tu pas Que j'avais fait merveille, et qu'en ce feint trépas J'éludais un chacun d'un deuil si vraisemblable. Que les plus clairvoyants l'auraient cru véritable? Mas. Vous avez en effet sujet de vous louer. Lér. Hé bien! je suis coupable, et je veux'l'avouer; Mais si jamais mon bien te fut considérable, Répare ce malheur et me sois secourable. Mas. Je vous baise les mains, je n'ai pas le loisir. Lél. Mascarille, mon fils. MAS. Point. Lét. Fais-moi ce plaisir. Mas. Non, je n'en ferai rien. Lél. Si tu m'es inflexible, Je m'en vais me tuer. Soit, il vous est'loisible. Lér. Je ne te puis fléchir? Non. MAS. Vois-tu'le fer prêt? Lér. Mas. Oui. Lét. Je vais le pousser. Faites ce qu'il vous plaît. Mas. Lél. Tu n'auras pas regret de m'arracher la vie? Mas. Non. Lét. Adieu, Mascarille.

Adieu, Monsieur Lélie.

Mas. Surely you are jesting?

LÉL. It is only too true.

4Mas. Really?

Lél. Really; I am in despair over it. It will put you in a furious rage.

Mas. I, Monsieur? I am not such a fool! Anger upsets one's digestion, and I take care of myself whatever happens. After all, it does not matter a fig to me whether Célie be free or a captive, whether Léandre buys her or she stays where she is.

LEL. Ah! do not be so indifferent toward me, be more 'lenient to me for this little slip. 'But for this last mishap, you must admit, I was doing wonders, and that in the pretended death-scene I deceived every one by my well-feigned mourning, until the sharpest eyes took it for real.

Mas. You have indeed much cause to praise yourself. Lél. Well, well, I plead guilty, and I acknowledge my fault; but, if ever you cared for my well-being,

repair this mishap and come to my help.

Mas. I wash my hands of you, I have no leisure.

LÉL. Mascarille, my dear boy.

Mas. No.

· LÉL. Do me this favour.

Mas. No,'I will not do anything of the kind.

Lér. If you are inflexible I shall go and kill myself.

Mas. Do so: there is no reason why you shouldn't.

Lér. Can I not move you?

Mas. No.

LÉL. You see this sword ready drawn?

Mas. Yes.

LÉL. I am going to plunge it in my heart.

Mas. Do as you please.

Lét. Would you not be sorry to take my life?

.. Mas. No.

Lél. Farewell, Mascarille.

Mas. Farewell, Monsieur Lélie.

Lér. What . . . ?

Mas. Tuez-vous donc vite: ah! que de longs devis '

Lél. Tu voudrais bien, ma foi, pour avoir mes habits, Que je fisse le sot, et que je me tuasse.

Mas. Savais-je pas qu'enfin ce n'était que grimace, Et quoi que ces esprits jurent d'effectuer, Qu'on n'est point aujourd'hui si prompt à se tuer?

SCÈNE VII

Léandre, Trufaldin, Lélie, Mascarille

Lél. Que vois-je? mon rival et Trufaldin ensemble? val achète Célie! ah! de frayeur je tremble.

Mas. Il ne faut point douter qu'il fera ce qu'il peut,
Et s'il a de l'argent, qu'il pourra ce qu'il veut.
Pour moi, j'en suis ravi: voilà la récompense
De vos brusques erreurs, de votre impatience.
Lél. Que dois-je faire ? dis, veuille me conseiller.
Mas. Je ne sais.
Lél. Laisse-moi, je vais le quereller.
Mas. Qu'en arrivera-t-il?

Lél. Que veux-tu que je fasse Pour empêcher ce coup?

MAS.

'Allez, je vous fais grâce;
Je jette encore un œil pitoyable sur vous:
Laissez-moi l'observer; par des moyens plus doux
Je vais, comme je crois, savoir ce qu'il projette.
Tru. Quand on viendra tantôt, c'est une affaire faite.

Mas. Il faut que je l'attrape, et que de ses desseins Je sois le confident, pour mieux les rendre vains. Léa. Grâces au Ciel, voilà mon bonheur hors d'atteinte.

J'ai su me l'assurer, et je n'ai plus de crainte:

Mas. Come, be quick and kill yourself: what a long

time you are doing it!

LÉL. Upon my word, I believe you would like me to play the fool and kill myself in order that you might have my clothes.

Mas. As if I did not know that it was only pretence all the time. Although there are many who swear to kill themselves, there are none nowadays ready to undertake the job.

Scene VII

Léandre, Trufaldin, Lélie, Mascarille

Lél. What do I see? My rival and Trufaldin together! PHe is going to buy Célie! Oh, Heavens! I am undone.

Mas. There is not the least doubt he will do what he can, and, if he has money, he can do what he likes. For my part, I am enchanted: this is the result of your stupid blunders and your impatience.

LÉL. What must I do? Tell me. Pray advise me.

Mas. I don't know..

LÉL. Well, I will go and have a quarrel with him.

Mas. What good will that do?

Lél. What would you advise me to do to get the better of him?

Mas. Well! I must forgive you; I will again take pity on you. Leave me to watch him; I think I can find out what he is after by gentler methods than quarrelling.

TRU. As soon as you send, the bargain shall be com-

pleted.

Mas. I must outwit him, and find out his designs in order to frustrate them.

Léa. Heaven be praised, my happiness is now beyond reach of failure; I have found how to secure it and I am no longer afraid. Whatever my rival Quoi que désormais puisse entreprendre un rival, Il n'est plus en pouvoir de me faire du mal.

Mas. Ahi! ahi! à l'aide! au meurtre! au secours! on m'assomme!

Ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ô traître! ô bourreau d'homme!

Léa. D'où procède cela? qu'est-ce? que te fait-on?

Mas. On vient de me donner deux cents coups de bâton.

Léa. Qui?

Mas.

Lélie.

Léa. Et pourquoi?

Mas. Pour une bagatelle Il me chasse et me bat d'une facon cruelle.

Léa. Ah! vraiment il a tort.

Mas. Mais, ou je ne pourrai, Ou je jure bien fort que je m'en vengerai;

Oui, je te ferai voir, batteur que Dieu confonde! Que ce n'est pas pour rien qu'il faut rouer le monde, Que je suis un valet, mais fort homme d'honneur, Et qu'après m'avoir eu quatre ans pour serviteur, Il ne me fallait pas payer en coups de gaules, Et me faire un affront si sensible aux épaules; Je te le dis encor, je saurai m'en venger: Une esclave te plaît, tu voulais m'engager

A la mettre en tes mains, et je veux faire en sorte Qu'un autre te l'enlève, ou le diable m'emporte!

Léa. Ecoute, Mascarille, et quitte ce transport: Tu m'as plu de tout temps, et je souhaitais fort Qu'un garçon comme toi, plein d'esprit et fidèle, A mon service un jour pût attacher son zèle: Enfin, si le parti te semble bon pour toi, Si tu veux me servir, je t'arrête avec moi.

Mas. Oui, Monsieur; d'autant mieux que le destin propice

M'offre à me bien venger en vous rendant service, Et que dans mes efforts pour vos contentements Je puis à mon brutal trouver des châtiments; De Célie, en un mot, par mon adresse extrême,,, may henceforth attempt, it is no longer in his

power to harm me.

Mas. Ah! ah! Help! Murder! Save me! They are killing me! Ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! Oh, you traitor! you brute!

Léa. Where does that come from? What is it? What are they doing to you?

Mas. I have just had an awful thrashing.

Léa. From whom?

Mas. Lélie.

Léa. What for?

Mas. He has given me the sack and beaten me cruelly for a mere trifle.

LÉA. Ah! What a shame!

Mas. But, if it is ever in my power, I swear by all the powers there be that I will be revenged on him; yes, I will let you see, you confounded thrasher, that you cannot break people's bones for nothing. Though I am but a valet, I am also a man of honour; and, after being in your service for four years, I deserved better wages than being switched across the shoulders. I tell you again I will have my revenge. You are in love with a slave girl, and you want me to put her in your power. Deuce take me if I don't help some one else to carry her off.

Léa. Listen, Mascarille, and stop this row: I always thought a good deal of you and I often wished that a smart, faithful lad like you might some day like to enter my service. In fact, if you incline to take the post and would like to serve me, I will engage you.

Mas. I accept the offer, Monsieur, and all the more readily because such good fortune affords me a fine chance of taking my revenge whilst serving you; I can punish my brutal master by my very efforts to please you; in fact, I hope that, by my clever methods, Célie and

Léa. Mon amour s'est rendu cet office lui-même: Enflammé d'un objet qui n'a point de défaut, Je viens de l'acheter moins encore qu'il ne vaut. Mas. Quoi? Célie est à vous?

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Léa. Tu la verrais paraître, Si de mes actions j'étais tout à fait maître ; Mais quoi? mon père l'est: comme il a volonté (Ainsi que je l'apprends d'un paquet apporté) De me déterminer à l'hymen d'Hippolyte, J'empêche qu'un rapport de tout ceci l'irrite. Donc avec Trufaldin, car je sors de chez lui, J'ai voulu tout exprès agir au nom d'autrui; Et l'achat fait, ma bague est la marque choisie Sur laquelle au premier il doit livrer Célie. Je songe auparavant à chercher les moyens D'ôter aux yeux de tous ce qui charme les miens, A trouver promptement un endroit favorable Où puisse être en secret cette captive aimable. Mas. Hors de la ville un peu, je puis avec raison

Mas. Hors de la ville un peu, je puis avec raison D'un vieux parent que j'ai vous offrir la maison: Là vous pourrez la mettre avec toute assurance, Et de cette action nul n'aura connaissance. Léa. Oui, ma foi, tu me fais un plaisir souhaité;

Tiens donc, et va pour moi prendre cette beauté:
Dès que par Trufaldin ma bague sera vue,
Aussitôt en tes mains elle sera rendue,
Et dans cette maison tu me la conduiras
Quand . . . Mais chut, Hippolyte est ici sur nos
pas.

Scène VIII

HIPPOLYTE, LÉANDRE, MASCARILLE

Hip. Je dois vous annoncer, Léandre, une nouvelle; Mais la trouverez-vous agréable, ou cruelle?

Léa. Pour en pouvoir juger, et répondre soudain, Il faudrait la savoir. Léa. My passion has already achieved that object without assistance. I have just bought that incomparable girl for much less than her market value.

Mas. What? is Célie now your property?

Lea. You should see her at once if I alone were master of my actions. But, alas! there is my father: he is determined to marry me to Hippolyte-so I learn from a letter just brought me-and, as I wish to prevent an outburst of irritation, should he hear of it, I have dealt with Trufaldin. whom I have just left, under another name. When the sale is completed, he is to deliver up Célie to the first comer who shows my ring as the agreed token. I must first, however, find means to hide this treasure from all other eyes than mine, and discover at once a suitable place in which to keep my pretty captive in secret.

Mas. I can offer you the house of an old relative of mine, just outside the town; you can put her there with an easy mind, and nobody need know anything about it.

LEA. Ah, that would be serving me indeed. Here you are, go and get the beautiful girl. Directly Trufaldin sees my ring, he will give her up to you, and you can take her to that house as . . . But

hush, here is Hippolyte close on our heels.

Scene VIII

HIPPOLYTE, LÉANDRE, MASCARILLE

HIP. I have some news to tell you, Léandre, but whether you will think it good or ill is a difficult question.

Léa. Before I can decide that and give you an answer I must know what it is.

HIP. Donnez-moi donc la main Jusqu'au temple; en marchant je pourrai vous

l'apprendre.

Léa. Va, va-t'en me servir sans davantage attendre. Mas. Oui, je te vais servir d'un plat de ma façon. Fut-il jamais au monde un plus heureux garçon? Oh! que dans un moment Lélie aura de joie! Sa maîtresse en nos mains tomber par cette voie! Recevoir tout son bien d'où l'on attend le mal, Et devenir heureux par la main d'un rival! Après ce rare exploit, je veux que l'on s'apprête A me peindre en héros un laurier sur la tête, Et qu'au bas du portrait on mette en lettres d'or : Vivat Mascarillus, fourbum imperator!

Scène IX

TRUFALDIN, MASCARILLE

Mas. Holà!

TRU. Que voulez-vous?

MAS.

Cette bague connue Vous dira le sujet qui cause ma venue.

Tru. Oui, je reconnais bien la bague que voilà: Je vais querir l'esclave; arrêtez un peu là.

SCÈNE X

LE COURRIER, TRUFALDIN, MASCARILLE

Le Cour. Seigneur, obligez-moi de m'enseigner un homme . . .

TRU. Et qui?

LE Cour. Je crois que c'est Trufaldin qu'il se nomme. Tru. Et que lui voulez-vous? Vous le voyez ici. LE Cour. Lui rendre seulement la lettre que voici.

HIP. Then give me your arm as far as the church; I will tell you what it is while we are walking there.

Léa. Go, go at once, and help me as I have told you. Mas. Yes, I will help you to a dish of my own dressing. Was there ever in this world a luckier lad? Oh! how delighted Lélie will be before he is many minutes older! His mistress has fallen completely into our power! He gets everything he wants from the hands of his rival, and finds happiness in the quarter from which he had only misery to expect. After this rare exploit, I shall expect to be painted as a laurel-crowned hero, with Vivat Mascarillus, fourbum imperator! at the bottom of the portrait in letters of gold.

Scene IX

TRUFALDIN, MASCARILLE

Mas. Hullo!

TRU. What do you want?

Mas. When you recognise this ring you will know what business it is that brings me here.

TRUF. Yes, I know that ring well enough. Stay there a minute; I will go and fetch the slave-girl.

Scene X

A MESSENGER, TRUFALDIN, MASCARILLE

A MES. Sir, will you tell me where a gentleman lives . . .

TRU. What gentleman?

A MES. I think he is called Trufaldin.

TRU. What do you want with him? I am he.

A MES. I only want to deliver this letter to him.

LETTRE

Le Ciel, dont la bonté prend souci de ma vie, Vient de me faire ouïr par un bruit assez doux Que ma fille, à quatre ans par des voleurs ravie, Sous le nom de Célie est esclave chez vous.

'Si vous sûtes jamais ce que c'est qu'être père, Et vous trouvez sensible aux tendresses du sang, 'Conservez-moi chez vous cette fille si chère, Comme si de la vôtre elle tenait le rang.

'Pour l'aller retirer je pars d'ici moi-même, Et vous vais de vos soins récompenser si bien, Que par votre bonheur, que je veux rendre extrême, Vous bénirez le jour où vous causez le mien.

MADRID.

Dom Pedro de Gusman, marquis de Montalcane.'

TRU. Quoiqu'à leur nation bien peu de foi soit due, Ils me l'avaient bien dit, ceux qui me l'ont vendue, Que je verrais dans peu quelqu'un la retirer, Et que je n'aurais pas sujet d'en murmurer; Et cependant j'allais par mon impatience Perdre aujourd'hui les fruits d'une haute espérance. Un seul moment plus tard tous vos pas étaient vains, J'allais mettre en l'instant cette fille en ses mains; Mais suffit, j'en aurai tout le soin qu'on desire. Vous-même vous voyez ce que je viens de lire: Vous direz à celui qui vous a fait venir Que je ne lui saurais ma parole tenir, Qu'il vienne retirer son argent.

Mas. Mais l'outrage Que vous lui faites . . . Va, sans causer davantage.

Mas. Ah! le fâcheux paquet que nous venons d'avoir! Le sort a bien donné la baye à mon espoir,

LETTER

Providence, who watches over my life with fatherly care, has just brought to my knowlege, by a most welcome report, that my daughter, who was stolen by robbers at the age of four, is now a slave in your house, under the name of Célie. If you ever knew what it was to be a father, and are touched by the tender ties of blood, keep my beloved daughter in your house as though she were your own. I am just leaving here to fetch her, and you shall be so richly rewarded by me for the care you take of her, that you will bless the day when you were the cause of my happiness.

MADRID.

Dom Pedro de Gusman, Marquis de Montalcane.'

Tau. Although very little faith can be put in gypsies, yet those who sold her to me did, indeed, tell me that some one would shortly come and take her away, and that I should not have cause to complain; yet, in my impatience, I was just going to lose that upon which I had built so much. One single moment later and your journey would have been entirely in vain. I was just going to hand over the girl to this gentleman. But, as it is, I will take all the care of her any one could wish. You yourself have heard what I have just read: tell the person who sent you that I cannot keep my promise; and that he must come and take back his money.

Mas. But the injury you thus do him . . .

TRU. You can go away, I don't want to hear any more.

Mas. Ah! what a cursed letter! Fate has indeed made a jest of all my hopes. What an unlucky

Et bien à la male-heure est-il venu d'Espagne, Ce courrier que la foudre ou la grêle accompagne: Jamais, certes, jamais plus beau commencement N'eut'en si peu de temps plus triste événement.

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Scène XI

Lélie, Mascarille

Mas. Quel beau'transport de joie à présent vous inspire?

LÉL. Laisse-m'en rire encore avant que te le dire. Mas.' Çà, rions donc bien fort, nous en avons sujet.

Lél. Ah! je ne serai plus de tes plaintes l'objet;
Tu ne me diras plus, toi qui toujours me cries,
Que je gâte en brouillon toutes tes fourberies:
J'ai bien joué moi-même un tour des plus adroits.
Il est vrai, je suis prompt, et m'emporte parfois;
Mais pourtant, quand je veux, j'ai l'imaginative
Aussi bonne en effet que personne qui vive;
Et toi-même avoûras que ce que j'ai fait part
D'une pointe d'esprit où peu de monde a part.

Mas. Sachons donc ce qu'a fait cette imaginative.

Lél. Tantôt, l'esprit ému d'une frayeur bien vive D'avoir vu Trufaldin avecque mon rival, Je sougeais à trouver un remède à ce mal, Lorsque me ramassant tout entier en moi-même, J'ai conçu, digéré, produit un stratagème Devant qui tous les tiens, dont tu fais tant de cas, Doivent sans contredit mettre pavillon bas. Mas. Mais qu'est-ce?

ÉL. Ah! s'il te plaît, donne-toi patience:
J'ai donc feint une lettre avecque diligence,
Comme d'un grand seigneur écrite à Trufaldin,
Qui mande qu'ayant su par un heureux destin

time this messenger pitched upon to come from Spain; may Heaven confound him! Surely never, never did so promising a beginning come'so soon to a more disastrous end.

Scene XI

LÉLIE, MASCARILLE

Mas. Why are you in such a good humour?

Lél. Let me laugh a little longer before I tell you.

Mas. 'All right, laugh away, we have good cause and
no mistake.

LEL. Ah! I shall never again be the butt of your taunts; never again will you who have always reproached me with spoiling all your designs by my meddling have cause to do so; I have myself played one of the cleverest of tricks. True, I am hasty and now and then too peppery; but, at the same time, when I like, my imagination is as sharp as that of any living soul; and you yourself will acknowledge that what I have done has hardly ever been equalled for cleverness.

Mas. Let us hear what this imagination of yours has

Lél. I was trying to put an end to my ill-luck, just now, being terribly afraid at the sight of Trufaldin with my rival, when, gathering all my wits together, I conceived, developed and produced a stratagem, before which all yours, that you brag about, must certainly lower their colours.

Mas. But what is it?

Lél. Ah! be patient, please: I carefully made up a letter which pretended to be written by a great noble to Trufaldin, in which I set forth that, having heard by a happy chance that a slave-girl called Célie in Qu'une esclave qu'il tient sous le nom de Célie Est sa fille, autrefois par des voleurs ravie, Il veut la venir prendre, et le conjure au moins De la garder toujours, de lui rendre des soins; Qu'à ce sujet il part d'Espagne, et doit pour elle Par de si grands présents reconnaître son zèle, Qu'il n'aura point regret de causer son bonheur.

Mas. Fort bien.

Lér. Écoute donc, voici bien le meilleur :
La lettre que je dis a donc été remise ;
Mais sais-tu bien comment? en saison si bien prise,
Que le porteur m'a dit que sans ce trait falot
Un homme l'emmenait, qui s'est trouvé fort sot.

Mas. Vous avez fait ce coup sans vous donner au diable?

Lél. Oui, d'un tour si subtil m'aurais-tu cru capable? Loue au moins mon adresse, et la dextérité Dont je romps d'un rival le dessein concerté.

Mas. A vous pouvoir louer selon votre mérite Je manque d'éloquence, et ma force est petite; Oui, pour bien étaler cet effort relevé, Ce bel exploit de guerre à nos yeux achevé. Ce grand et rare effet d'une imaginative Qui ne cède en vigueur à personne qui vive. Ma langue est impuissante, et je voudrais avoir Celles de tous les gens du plus exquis savoir, Pour vous dire en beaux vers, ou bien en docte prose. Que vous serez toujours, quoi que l'on se propose, Tout ce que vous avez été durant vos jours. C'est-à-dire un esprit chaussé tout à rebours, Une raison malade et toujours en débauche, Un envers du bon sens, un jugement à gauche, Un brouillon, une bête, un brusque, un étourdi. Que sais-je? un . . . cent fois plus encor que je ne dis:

C'est faire en abrégé votre panégyrique.

Trufaldin's possession was the writer's daughter, who had been kidnapped some time ago, he wished to come and take her, begging Trufaldin to keep charge of her and take great care of her; I added that the writer was just setting out from Spain to fetch her and that he promised Trufaldin such handsome presents for keeping her safe that he would never regret having performed so good a deed.

Mas. How very fine!

LÉL. But listen—the best is yet to come. This letter was sent to him; and—would you believe it?—just in the very nick of time, so my messenger told me. But for this excellent device, a fellow was there who would have taken her away, and he looked mighty silly.

Mas. And you did all this without help from the devil?

Let. Yes, would you have believed me capable of such a subtle idea? At least praise my cleverness and the ingenuity with which I have upset my rival's

well-laid plans.

Mas. I have not the eloquence to praise you as you deserve: it is beyond me. Yes, indeed, my tongue is impotent sufficiently to extol this wonderful act. this fine assault-at-arms achieved before our very eyes, this great and rare burst of imagination unsurpassed in power by that of any living being; I could long for the eloquence of the most exquisitely accomplished of men to tell you in noble verse or even in learned prose, that you will ever be, no matter what happens, the same that you have been all your life, namely, a man wedded to a crossgrained wit, whose reason is unbalanced and always runs riot, whose common sense is deranged and judgment inept, a scatterbrain, an ass, a fool, a blunderer-what else can I call you? a . . . hundred times worse than anything I have yet said. This is an epitome of your panegyric.

Lél. Apprends-moi le sujet qui contre moi te pique :
 Ai-je fait quelque chose? éclaircis-moi ce point.
 Mas. Non, vous n'avez rien fait; mais ne me suivez point.

Lél. Je te suivrai partout, pour savoir ce mystère.

Mas. Oui? sus donc, préparez vos jambes à bien faire, Car je vais vous fournir de quoi les exercer.

Léz. Il m'échappe! oh! malheur qui ne se peut forcer!

Au discours qu'il m'a fait que saurais-je comprendre? Et quel mauvais office aurais-je pu me rendre?

FIN DU SECOND ACTE

ACTE III

Scène I

MASCARILLE

Mas. (seul). Taisez-vous, ma bonté, cessez votre entretien:

Vous êtes une sotte, et je n'en ferai rien.
Oui, vous avez raison, mon courroux, je l'avoue:
Relier tant de fois ce qu'un brouillon dénoue,
C'est trop de patience, et je dois en sortir,
Après de si beaux coups qu'il a su divertir.
Mais aussi, raisonnons un peu sans violence:
Si je suis maintenant ma juste impatience,
On dira que je cède à la difficulté,
Que je me trouve à bout de ma subtilité;
Et que deviendra lors cette publique estime
Qui te vante partout pour un fourbe sublime,
Et que tu t'es acquise en tant d'occasions,

Let. Tell me what I have done to vex you so much. Have I done anything wrong? Please tell me.

Mas. No, you have not done anything at all; but do not follow me about.

Lél. I will follow you everywhere till I fathom this mystery.

Mas. Indeed? Come on then and put your best foot foremost, for I will give you plenty of exercise.

Lift. He has escaped me! Oh! my ill-luck will never change! What am I to understand from his sermonising? What ill-turn can I possibly have done myself?

END OF THE SECOND ACT

ACT III

Scene I

MASCARILLE

Mas. (alone). Peace, good Mascarille, cease your pleading: you are a fool, and I will have no more to say to you. Yes, Mascarille, you do right to be angry and stifle your better nature. It is beyond all patience to be for ever patching up the blunders of an idiot; I ought to give it up after the splendid schemes he has managed to spoil. But, nevertheless, let us just consider things calmly: if I now follow my inclination and give vent to a quite natural impatience, people will say I have yielded to difficulty, that I am at the end of my resources; and then what will become of that universal notoriety as a cheat of the first rank, which I have acquired on so many occasions by being never found

A ne t'être jamais vu court d'inventions?
L'honneur, ô Mascarille, est une belle chose:
A tes nobles travaux ne fais aucune pause;
Et quoi qu'un maître ait fait pour te faire enrager,
Achève pour ta gloire, et non pour l'obliger.
Mais quoi? que feras-tu, que de l'eau toute claire,
Traversé sans repos par ce démon contraire?
Tu vois qu'à chaque instant il te fait déchanter,
Et que c'est battre l'eau de prétendre arrêter
Ce torrent effréné, qui de tes artifices
Renverse en un moment les plus beaux édifices.
Hé bien! pour toute grâce, encore un coup du

moins,
Au hasard du succès, sacrifions des soins;
Et s'il poursuit encore à rompre notre chance,
J'y consens, ôtons-lui toute notre assistance.
Cependant notre affaire encor n'irait pas mal,
Si par là nous pouvions perdre notre rival,
Et que Léandre enfin, lassé de sa poursuite,
Nous laissât jour entier pour ce que je médite.
Oui, je roule en ma tête un trait ingénieux,
Dont je promettrais bien un succès glorieux,
Si je puis n'avoir plus cet obstacle à combattre:
Bon, voyons si son feu se rend opiniâtre.

Scène II

Léandre, Mascarille

Mas. Monsieur, j'ai perdu temps, votre homme se dédit.

Léa. De la chose lui-même il m'a fait un récit; Mais c'est bien plus, j'ai su que tout ce beau mystère

D'un rapt d'égyptiens, d'un grand seigneur pour père Qui doit partir d'Espagne et venir en ces lieux, N'est qu'un pur stratagème, un trait facétieux, Une histoire à plaisir, un conte dont Lélie A voulu détourner notre achat de Célie.

wanting in resourcefulness? Honour, O Mascarille, is a grand thing! Do not discontinue thy noble work; and, no matter what a master may have done to incense thee, work, not to please him, but for thy own glory. But how to accomplish this end, when, whatever thou doest, the clear stream of thy intentions is incessantly troubled by this evil genius? Thou seest that, at every turn, he makes you change your tone, and it is beating the air to try to stop the terrific hurricane which overturns in a moment thy most beautiful erections. Ah! well! out of sheer good nature we will make just one more attempt to do our best, no matter what happens; and if he still continues to spoil sport I will swear never to help him again. After all, matters may not turn out badly, if we can but get rid of our rival, if Léandre, weary of his pursuit, will but leave us one whole day for my scheme. Yes, I am revolving a most ingenious plan, which I feel certain will be a triumphant success, if I can but move this obstacle from my course. Good, let us see if he is still so set-on in his love-affair.

Scene II

LÉANDRE, MASCARILLE

Mas. Monsieur, I have lost my labour, your man will

not keep his word.

Léa. He has told me all that himself; but, what is of far more importance, I have discovered that all this fine rigmarole of being kidnapped by gipsies, of a grandee father setting out from Spain to come here, is nothing but pure trickery, a made up tale, a silly fable, a story by which Lélie hoped to prevent our buying Célie. Mas. Voyez un peu la fourbe!

Léa. Et pourtant Trufaldin

Est si bien imprimé de ce conte badin,

Mord si bien à l'appas de cette faible ruse,

Qu'il ne veut point souffrir que l'on le désabuse.

Mas. C'est pourquoi désormais il la gardera bien,

Et je ne vois pas lieu d'y prétendre plus rien.

Léa. Si d'abord à mes yeux elle parut aimable,
Je viens de la trouver tout à fait adorable,
Et je suis en suspens si, pour me l'acquérir,
Aux extrémes moyens je ne dois point courir,
Par le don de ma foi rompre sa destinée,
Et changer ses liens en ceux de l'hyménée.
Mas. Vous pourriez l'épouser!
Léa. Je ne sais; mais enfin,
Si quelque obscurité se trouve en son destin,
Sa grâce et sa vertu sont de douces amorces,
Qui pour tirer les cœurs ont d'incroyables forces.
Mas. Sa vertu, dites-vous?

Mas. Sa vertu, dites-vous?

Léa. Quoi? que murmures-tu?

Achève, explique-toi sur ce mot de vertu.

Mas. Monsieur, votre visage en un moment s'altère, Et je ferai bien mieux peut-être de me taire. Léa. Non, non, parle. Mas. Hé bien donc! très-charitablement Je vous veux retirer de votre aveuglement. Cette fille . . .

Léa. Poursuis.

Mas. N'est rien moins qu'inhumaine;
Dans le particulier elle oblige sans peine;
Et son cœur, croyez-moi, n'est point roche, après
tout,

A quiconque la sait prendre par le bon bout. Elle fait la sucrée, et veut passer pour prude; Mais je puis en parler avecque certitude: Vous savez que je suis quelque peu d'un métier, A me devoir connaître en un pareil gibier.

Léa. Célie . . .

Mas. Did you ever see such knavery !

Léa. Nevertheless, Trufaldin is so persuaded of the truth of this silly tale, and has been taken in so easily by this feeble device, that he will not allow himself to be disabused.

Mas. And, henceforth, I suppose, he will take such good care of her that I do not see we can do any-

thing further.

Léa. If, at first, she seemed to me lovable, I now think her perfectly adorable, and I am considering whether I ought not to take extreme measures. If only I could thereby gain possession of her I would plight her my troth, in order to alleviate her fate, and change her present bondage for that of marriage.

Mas. You would marry her!

Lea. I think so; even if her origin is somewhat obscure, her grace and her virtue are sweet attractions, which have extraordinarily fascinating power.

Mas. Her virtue, did you say?

Lea. Eh? What are you muttering about? Finish your sentence and tell me what you mean by emphasising the word virtue.

Mas. Monsieur, your face has changed in a moment:
I had probably far better hold my tongue.

Léa. No, no-speak.

Mas. Very well then! Out of charity, I will open your eyes to the truth. That girl . . .

Léa. Go on.

Mas. Is not in the least hard-hearted; when alone with any one she is quite complaisant. Believe me, she is not stony-hearted in the least to those who know how to get on the soft side of her. She affects innocence, and tries to pass for a prude; but I can speak of her with accurate knowledge. You know that I am a bit of a connoisseur in game of this sort.

Léa. Célie . . .

Mas. Oui, sa pudeur n'est que franche grimace, Qu'une ombre de vertu qui garde mal la place, Et qui s'évanouit, comme l'on peut savoir, Aux rayons du soleil qu'une bourse fait voir.

Léa. Las! que dis-tu? croirai-je un discours de la sorte?

Mas. Monsieur, les volontés sont libres: que m'importe?

Non, ne me croyez pas, suivez votre dessein, Prenez cette matoise, et lui donnez la main: Toute la ville en corps reconnaîtra ce zèle, Et vous épouserez le bien public en elle.

Léa. Quelle surprise étrange!

Mas. Il a pris l'hameçon;
Courage: s'il s'y peut enferrer tout de bon,
Nous nous ôtons du pied une fâcheuse épine.

Léa. Oui, d'un coup étonnant ce discours m'assassine.

Mas. Quoi? vous pourriez . . .?

Léa. Va-t'en jusqu'à la poste, et voi
Je ne sais quel paquet qui doit venir pour moi.
Qui ne s'y fût trompé? jamais l'air d'un visage,
Si ce qu'il dit est vrai, n'imposa davantage.

Scène III

LÉLIE, LÉANDRE

Lér. Du chagrin qui vous tient quel peut être l'objet? Léa. Moi?

LÉL. Vous-même.

Léa. Pourtant je n'en ai point sujet. Lél. Je vois bien ce que c'est, Célie en est la cause. Léa. Mon esprit ne court pas après si peu de chose. Lél. Pour elle vous aviez pourtant de grands desseins; Mais il faut dire ainsi lorsqu'ils se trouvent vains. Mas. Yes, her prudishness is simply sham, her virtue nothing but make-believe, which capitulates at the first assault, as all the world knows, and, like dew after sunrise, vanishes before the golden gleam of a purse.

Léa. Alas! What are you saying? How can you

expect me to believe such talk as this?

Mas. Monsieur, you can please yourself, it makes no difference to me. No, do not believe me, follow your own inclinations. Take this sly puss and marry her: the whole town in a body will be grateful for your zeal, for, by marrying her, you take what is common property under your protection.

Lea. Oh! it is awful!

Mas. He has taken the bait; hurrah! if he does but swallow it in real earnest we shall have got out of a tight place.

Léa. Yes, this fearful blow overwhelms me.

Mas. What? Could you . . .?

Léa. Go to the post-office—I think there may be a letter for me. Who would not have been taken in? If what he says be true, no human countenance ever so belied its looks

Scene III

Lélie, Léandre

LÉL. Why are you looking so sad?

Léa. I?

Lél. Yes, you.

LÉA. I am not sad about anything.

LÉL. I see well enough what it is, it is about Célie.

Léa. My mind does not run after such trifles.

Lér. Yét you had laid great schemes to get hold of her; you speak as though your plans had gone astray. Léa. Si j'étais assez sot pour chérir ses caresses, Je me moquerais bien de toutes vos finesses.

LÉL. Quelles finesses donc?

Léa. Mon Dieu! nous savons tout.

Lél. Quoi?

Léa. Votre procédé de l'un à l'autre bout.

LÉL. C'est de l'hébreu pour moi, je n'y puis rien comprendre.

Léa. Feignez, si vous voulez, de ne me pas entendre; Mais, croyez-moi, cessez de craindre pour un bien Où je serais fâché de vous disputer rien; J'aime fort la beauté qui n'est point profanée, Et ne veux point brûler pour une abandonnée.

Lél. Tout beau, tout beau, Léandre.

Léa. Ah! que vous êtes bon! Allez, vous dis-je encor, servez-la sans soupcon:

Vous pourrez vous nommer homme à bonnes fortunes.

Il est vrai, sa beauté n'est pas des plus communes; Mais en revanche aussi le reste est fort commun.

Lél. Léandre, arrêtons-là ce discours importun.
Contre moi tant d'efforts qu'il vous plaira pour elle;
Mais surtout retenez cette atteinte mortelle:
Sachez que je m'impute à trop de lâcheté
D'entendre mal parler de ma divinité,
Et que j'aurai toujours bien moins de répugnance

A souffrir votre amour qu'un discours qui l'offense. Léa. Ce que j'avance ici me vient de bonne part.

Let. Quiconque vous l'a dit, est un lâche, un pendard:

On ne peut imposer de tache à cette fille; Je connais bien son cœur.

Léa. Mais enfin Mascarille D'un semblable procès est juge compétent : C'est lui qui la condamne.

Lér. Oui?

Léa. Lui-même.

Lés. Il prétend

Léa. If I were such a fool as to long for her caresses, I should indeed laugh at all your artifices.

Lél. What artifices do you mean?

Léa. Ah! I know all about them.

LEL. What?

Léa. Your proceedings from beginning to end.

LEL. This is Hebrew to me, I do not understand

anything about it.

Léa. You may pretend to misunderstand me if you like, but, you may take my word for it, you need not have any fear, I should be sorry to dispute with you for the possession of such a property; I love unpolluted beauty as much as any one, but I do not hanker after a huzzy.

LEL. Gently, gently, Léandre.

Léa. Oh! how good you are! I tell you again, wait on her without fear: you can congratulate yourself on being a lady-killer. True, her beauty is out of the common, but, on the other hand, the rest of her is common enough.

Lél. Léandre, enough of this impertinent talk. Use what means you please to hinder me from obtaining her; but cease at once to traduce her so abominably. It has been cowardly of me to listen to your slanders against my earthly divinity; I would always far rather tolerate your love for her than hear her spoken of so offensively.

Léa. What I have just said comes to me on good

authority.

Lex. Whoever told it you is a villain and a rogue: the girl is immaculate; I know her inmost heart.

Léa. But surely Mascarille is a competent judge of these things: it is he who condemns her.

LÉL. He?

Léa. Himself.

Lél. He insolently presumes to slander a respectable

D'une fille d'honneur insolemment médire, Et que peut-être encor je n'en ferai que rire? Gage qu'il se dédit.

LÉA. Et moi gage que non. LÉL. Parbleu je le ferais mourir sous le bâton.

S'il m'avait soutenu des faussetés pareilles. Léa. Moi, je lui couperais sur-le-champ les oreilles, S'il n'était pas garant de tout ce qu'il m'a dit.

SCÈNE IV

Lélie, Léandre, Mascarille

Lél. Ah! bon, bon, le voilà: venez çà, chien maudit.

Mas Quoi?

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Lél. Langue de serpent fertile en impostures, Vous osez sur Célie attacher vos morsures, Et lui calomnier la plus rare vertu

Qui puisse faire éclat sous un sort abattu?

Mas. Doucement, ce discours est de mon industrie. Lél. Non, non, point de clin d'œil et point de rail-

lerie:
Je suis aveugle à tout, sourd à quoi que ce soit;
Fût-ce mon propre frère, il me la payerait;
Et sur ce que j'adore oser porter le blâme,
C'est me faire une plaie au plus tendre de l'âme.
Tous ces signes sont vains: quels discours as-tu
faits?

Mas. Mon Dieu, ne cherchons point querelle, ou je m'en vais.

Lél. Tu n'échapperas pas.

Mas. Ahii!

LEL. Parle donc, confesse.

Mas. Laissez-moi; je vous dis que c'est un tour d'adresse.

LÉL. Dépêche, qu'as-tu dit? vide entre nous ce point.

girl, and thinks, forsooth, that I shall only laugh at it? Upon my word, he shall retract.

Léa. I bet he won't.

Let. Ah! I would have flogged him to death if he had told me such lies.

Léa. And I would have cropped his ears for him if he had not proved the truth of what he told me.

Scene IV

LÉLIE, LÉANDRE, MASCARILLE

LEL. Ah! good, good, there he is: come here, you cursed dog.

Mas. What?

Lél. You lying, poisonous-tongued snake! how dare you fasten your fangs on Célie, and calumniate the most exquisite virtue that ever shone surrounded by misfortune?

Mas. Gently, this is a tale of my own invention.

Let. No, no, have done with your winks and jokes: I am blind and deaf to them all, and care not what they mean; were you my own brother, I would make you smart for it; to defame the girl I worship is to wound me to the quick. All these signs are useless: what did you say to him?

Mas. For goodness' sake don't quarrel or I shall go away.

LÉL. You shall not escape.

Mas. Oh-h!

LÉL. Speak then, confess.

Mas. Let me go; I tell you it is part of a plot.

Lél. Be quick, what did you say? You must clear up this point at once.

Mas. J'ai dit ce que j'ai dit, ne vous emportez point. Lél. Ah! je vous ferai bien parler d'une autre sorte. Léa. Alte un peu: retenez l'ardeur qui vous emporte. Mas. Fut-il jamais au monde un esprit moins sensé?

Lél. Laissez-moi contenter mon courage offensé. Léa. C'est trop que de vouloir le battre en ma présence.

Lél. Quoi? châtier mes gens n'est pas en ma puissance?

Léa. Comment vos gens?

Mas. Encore! il va tout découvrir. Lél. Quand j'aurais volonté de le battre à mourir,

Hé bien! c'est mon valet.

Léa. C'est maintenant le nôtre.

Lér. Le trait est admirable! et comment donc le vôtre?

Sans doute . . .

Mas. (bas). Doucement.

Lér. Hem, que veux-tu conter? Mas. (bas). Ah! le double bourreau, qui me va tout

Et qui ne comprend rien, quelque signe qu'on donne!

Lél. Vous rêvez bien, Léandre, et me la baillez bonne. Il n'est pas mon valet?

LÉA. Pour quelque mal commis, Hors de votre service il n'a pas été mis?

Tr To no sais as and a'cet

LÉI. Je ne sais ce que c'est.

LÉA. Et plein de violence, Vous n'avez pas chargé son dos avec outrance?

Lér. Point du tout. Moi? l'avoir chassé, roué de coups?

Vous vous moquez de moi, Léandre, ou lui de vous. Mas. Pousse, pousse, bourreau, tu fais bien tes affaires.

Léa. Donc les coups de bâton ne sont qu'imaginaires? Mas. Il ne sait ce qu'il dit, sa mémoire . . .

Léa. Non, non.

Mas. I said what I said, do not be angry.

Lér. Ah! I'll soon make you tell a different tale.

LEA. Stop a bit: you must control your passion.

Mas. Was there ever in the world such a senseless blockhead?

LÉL. Let me satisfy my just wrath.

Léa. It is going too far to want to chastise him in my presence.

LÉL. What? May I not beat my own servants?

Léa. What do you mean by your servants?

Mas. There now! he will discover everything.

LEL. If I wanted to thrash him to death, what then? he is my valet to use as I please.

Léa. He is now mine.

Lél. What an excellent joke! how comes he to be yours? No doubt . . .

Mas. (whispers). Be careful.

LÉL. Eh? what do you want to say?

Mas. (aside). Ah! the stupid idiot, he will spoil it all, he won't understand any signs I make him!

Léz. You must be dreaming, Léandre, to talk to me like that. Not my valet, do you say?

Léa. Did you not dismiss him from your service for some fault he had committed?

LÉL. I know nothing of the sort.

LEA. And did you not thrash him soundly, black and

Lél. Nothing of the kind. I dismiss him? I thrash him? You are mocking me, Léandre, or he is fooling you.

Mas. Go on, go on, you blunderer, you are managing matters excellently.

Léa. Then the thrashings were purely imaginary?

Mas. He does not know what he is talking about, his memory . . .

Léa. No, no. All these signs tell against you; yes, I

Tous ces signes pour toi ne disent rien de bon; Oui, d'un tour délicat mon esprit te soupçonne; Mais pour l'invention, va, je te le pardonne : C'est bien assez pour moi qu'il m'a désabusé, De voir par quels motifs tu m'avais imposé, Et que m'étant commis à ton zèle hypocrite, A si bon compte encor je m'en sois trouvé quitte. Ceci doit s'appeler un avis au lecteur.

Adieu, Lélie, adieu: très-humble serviteur.

Mas. Courage, mon garçon: tout heur nous accompagne;

Mettons flamberge au vent et bravoure en campagne, Faisons l'Olibrius, l'occiseur d'innocents.

Lél. Il t'avait accusé de discours médisants Contre . . .

Mas. Et vous ne pouviez souffrir mon artifice? Lui laisser son erreur, qui vous rendait service, Et par qui son amour s'en était presque allé? Non, il a l'esprit franc et point dissimulé. Enfin chez son rival je m'ancre avec adresse; Cette fourbe en mes mains va mettre sa maîtresse: Il me la fait manquer avec de faux rapports; Je veux de son rival alentir les transports: Mon brave incontinent vient, qui le désabuse; J'ai beau lui faire signe, et montrer que c'est ruse : Point d'affaire, il poursuit sa pointe jusqu'au bout, Et n'est point satisfait qu'il n'ait découvert tout : Grand et sublime effort d'une imaginative Qui ne le cède point à personne qui vive! C'est une rare pièce, et digne sur ma foi, Qu'on en fasse présent au cabinet d'un roi!

A moins d'être informé des choses que tu tentes, J'en ferais encor cent de la sorte. Tant pis. Lél. Au moins, pour t'emporter à de justes dépits, Fais-moi dans tes desseins entrer de quelque chose:

Lél. Je ne m'étonne pas si je romps tes attentes :

suspect you have been up to some of your fine tricks; well, I forgive you for the sake of your cleverness: I am glad enough to have been deceived, and I see why you imposed on me; having given myself up to your hypocritical zeal, I am only too glad to have come off as cheaply as I have. This ought to be a warning to others. Farewell, Lélie, farewell: I am your very humble servant.

Mas. Courage, my lad: may good luck be ours; let us draw our swords and bravely set forth as Olibrius, murderer of the Innocents.

LML. He accused you of speaking maliciously against . . .

Mas. And you could not let my plans mature, but must disabuse him of his error even though it served your ends and almost put him out of love with his girl. No, you have a fine nature and abhor dissimulation. When, at last, I have wormed myself into your rival's confidence by my own skill, and the nincompoop was going to place his mistress in my power, you must needs make my schemes miscarry with your feigned letters; when I seek to lessen your rival's raptures, you put your silly blundering foot in it to spoil everything; in vain did I make signs to tell you it was a ruse: it was not the least use, you go on your wilful way to the bitter end and do not rest satisfied until you have disclosed everything. What a great and rare burst of imagination, unsurpassed by that of any living being! You are unique and worthy, upon my word, of being presented to the Royal Museum!

Let. It is no wonder I upset your plans, when I am not even informed of your designs. I shall probably

do the same thing over and over again.

Mas. So much the worse.

Lér. At least, if you want to justify your anger, let me into the secret of your plans to some extent; for, being ignorant of what is going on, I am always Mais que de leurs ressorts la porte me soit close, C'est ce qui fait toujours que je suis pris sans vert.

Mas. Je crois que vous seriez un maître d'arme expert:
Vous savez à merveille, en toutes aventures,
Prendre les contre-temps et rompre les mesures.

Lél. Puisque la chose est faite, il n'y faut plus penser:
Mon rival en tout cas ne peut me traverser:

Mon rival en tout cas ne peut me traverser;

Et pourvu que tes soins, en qui je me repose . . .

Mas. Laissons-là ce discours, et parlons d'autre chose:
Je ne m'apaise pas, non, si facilement;
Je suis trop en colère. Il faut premièrement
Me rendre un bon office, et nous verrons ensuite
Si je dois de vos feux reprendre la conduite.
Lél. S'il ne tient qu'à cela, je n'y résiste pas:
As-tu besoin, dis-moi, de mon sang, de mes bras?
Mas. De quelle vision sa cervelle est frappée!

Vous êtes de l'humeur de ces amis d'épée Que l'on trouve toujours plus prompts à dégainer Qu'à tirer un teston, s'il fallait le donner.

Lél. Que puis-je donc pour toi?

Mas. C'est que de votre père Il faut absolument apaiser la colère.

Lél. Nous avons fait la paix.

Mas. Oui, mais non pas pour nous. Je l'ai fait ce matin mort pour l'amour de vous : La vision le choque, et de pareilles feintes Aux vieillards comme lui sont de dures atteintes. Qui sur l'état prochain de leur condition Leur font faire à regret triste réflexion. Le bon homme, tout vieux, chérit fort la lumière, Et ne veut point de jeu dessus cette matière; Il craint le pronostic, et contre moi fâché, On m'a dit qu'en justice il m'avait recherché: J'ai peur, si le logis du Roi fait ma demeure, De m'y trouver si bien dès le premier quart d'heure, Que j'aie peine aussi d'en sortir par après. Contre moi dès longtemps on a force décrets: Car enfin la vertu n'est jamais sans envie, Et dans ce maudit siècle est toujours poursuivie. Allez donc le fléchir.

likely to be caught napping.

Mas. I believe you would make a splendid fencingmaster: you are so ingenious at every turn of the game, whether in attack or defence.

Let. Well, as the mischief is done, it is no good thinking any more about it: in any case, my rival cannot get the better of me; and, provided you but

help me, as I hope . . .

Mas. Let us drop the subject and talk of something else. I am far too angry to be so easily appeased. You must first do me a service and we will then see whether I can bring myself to undertake your loveaffair again.

Ler. If that is all that is necessary, I will refuse you nothing. What do you want of me? My life?

my sword?

Mas. What odd notions he gets into his head! You are like the rest of swashbucklers, ever more ready to draw out your sword than your purse, were it only for a trifle.

Lér. What then can I do for you?

Mas. It is imperative that you appease your father's wrath.

Lér. We have made up our quarrel.

Mas. Yes, but not for both of us. I killed him this morning for love of you. He was horrified at the idea and, like all old men, he strongly objects to such jokes, which make them reflect on the melancholy fact that they are not far off their end in reality. Notwithstanding his age, the old boy clings fast to life, and does not think the matter a fit subject for jest. He fears lest it should be an omen, and is so angry with me that I hear he has made a formal charge against me. I am afraid that, if I am provided with lodging at the king's expense, I shall find it so comfortable from the very first that it will be difficult to tear myself away. There are many warrants out against me as it is, for, of course, in this cursed age, virtue is always envied and persecuted. Go then and appease him.

Lér. Oui, nous le fléchirons;

Mais aussi tu promets . . .

Mas. Ah! mon Dieu, nous verrons. Ma foi, prenons haleine après tant de fatigues, Cessons pour quelque temps le cours de nos intrigues Et de nous tormenter de même qu'un lutin: Léandre, pour nous nuire, est hors de garde enfin, Et Célie, arrêtée avecque l'artifice. . . .

Scène V

ERGASTE, MASCARILLE

Erc. Je te cherchais partout pour te'rendre un service.

Pour te donner avis d'un secret important.

Mas. Quoi donc?

Erg. N'avons-nous point ici quelque écoutant?

Erg. Nous sommes amis autant qu'on le peut être;
Je sais bien tes desseins, et l'amour de ton maître.
Songez à vous tantôt: Léandré fait parti
Pour enlever Célie, et j'en suis averti,
Qu'il a mis ordre à tout, et qu'il se persuade
D'entrer chez Trufaldin par une mascarade,
Ayant su qu'en ce temps, assez souvent le soir,
Des femmes du quartier en masque l'allaient voir.
Mas. Oui? Suffit. Il n'est pas au comble de sa joie;

Je pourrai bien tantôt lui souffler cette proie, Et contre cet assaut je sais un coup fourré Par qui je veux qu'il soit de lui-même enferré: Il ne sait pas les dons dont mon âme est pourvue. Adieu: nous boirons pinte à la première vue. Il faut, il faut tirer à nous ce que d'heureux Pourrait avoir en soi ce projet amoureux, Et par une surprise adroite et non commune, Sans courir le danger en tenter la fortune. Si je vais me masquer pour devancer ses pas, Léandre assurément ne nous bravera pas;

Lér. Indeed, I will appease him, but you must promise at the same time . . .

Mas. Oh yes! we will see about that later. But I must first get my breath after working so hard; I will cease my intrigues for a time and not be in such a devil of a hurry. Léandre cannot now hurt us, for Célie is strictly under guard since the ruse . . .

Scene V

ERGASTE, MASCARILLE

Erg. I have been hunting everywhere for you to do you a service. I have an important secret to tell you.

Mas. What is it.

Erg. There is no one here who can hear us?

Mas. No one.

Erg. We are the best of friends; I know all your schemes and all about your master's love affair. Be on your guard at once: Léandre is plotting to carry off Célie, and I am informed that he has all his preparations concluded. He has heard that about this time Trufaldin usually entertains ladies of the neighbourhood, who go masked by night to see him, and he is going to Trufaldin's masked.

Mas. Indeed! So be it. He has not reached his goal yet: I may happen to catch the prey. I know a counter-thrust to that stroke, and he may find himself spitted. He little knows the extent of my gift. Good-bye, we will have a carouse together the next time we meet. And now, and now we must suck all the juice of this for ourselves, turn the position in a way that will never be suspected and so achieve fortune without running any risk. If I mask myself and am first in the field, Léandre will certainly not face us; and if we are there before him, and carry off the prize, he will have to bear

Et là, premier que lui si nous faisons la prise, Il aura fait pour nous les frais de l'entreprise. Puisque par son dessein déjà presque éventé, Le soupcon tombera toujours de son côté, Et que nous, à couvert de toutes ses poursuites, De ce coup hasardeux ne craindrons point les suites. C'est ne se point commettre à faire de l'éclat, Et tirer les marrons de la patte du chat. Allons donc nous masquer avec quelques bons frères; Pour prévenir nos gens il ne faut tarder guères. Je sais où gît le lièvre, et me puis sans travail Fournir en un moment d'hommes et d'attirail. Croyez que je mets bien mon adresse en usage: Si j'ai recu du Ciel les fourbes en partage, Je ne suis point au rang de ces esprits mal nés Qui cachent les talents que Dieu leur a donnés.

Scène VI

LÉLIE, ERGASTE

LÉL. Il prétend l'enlever avec sa mascarade?

Eng. Il n'est rien plus certain: quelqu'un de sa brigade

M'ayant de ce dessein instruit, sans m'arrêter, A Mascarille lors j'ai couru tout conter, Qui s'en va, m'a-t-il dit, rompre cette partie Par une invention dessus le champ bâtie; Et comme je vous ai rencontré par hasard, J'ai cru que je devais de tout vous faire part.

Lél. Tu'm'obliges par trop avec cette nouvelle:
Va, je reconnaîtrai ce service fidèle.
Mon drôle assurément leur jouera quelque trait;
Mais je veux de ma part seconder son projet:
Il ne sera pas dit qu'en un fait qui me touche,
Je ne me sois non plus remué qu'une souche.
Voici l'heure: ils seront surpris à mon aspect.

Foin! que n'ai-je avec moi pris mon porte-respect?

the expense. His designs are already known, and, therefore, suspicion is certain to fall on him. As for us, we shall be safe from all pursuit from him and need not be afraid of any evil consequences following the plot. We shall hide behind the scenes, and he will be the cat's paw that pulls the chestnuts out of the fire. Now I must go and mask with my pals: there must be no delay if we are to supplant our friends. I know where the hare is hiding, and can produce at a moment's notice both lads and disguises. I give you my word I will make good use of my sharp wits. If Heaven has bestowed upon me the gift of knavery, I am not one of your poor-spirited sort who hide the talents God has given them.

Scene VI

LÉLIE, ERGASTE

Lél. So he intends to carry her off by means of a masquerade?

masquerade

Eng. Yes, that is so; one of his fellows having told me about this plan, I ran off at once to divulge it all to Mascarille, who is going, so he told me, to spoil the sport by a stratagem he concocted on the spur of the moment, and as I have by chance come across you, I thought I ought to tell you about it.

Lér. I am much obliged to you for your information. I shall not forget your loyal act. That rascal of mine is bound to play them some trick; and I, too, will back him up; it shall never be said that in a matter which concerns me I did not budge an inch. Now is the time: they will be surprised when they see me. A-hah! Why did I not bring my 'persuader' with me? But, let come what

Mais vienne qui voudra contre notre personne : J'ai deux bons pistolets, et mon épée est bonne. Holà! quelqu'un, un mot.

Scène VII

Lélie, Trufaldin

Tru. Qu'est-ce? qui me vient voir? Lél. Fermez soigneusement votre porte ce soir. Tru. Pourquoi?

Lén. Certaines gens font une mascarade, Pour vous venir donner une fâcheusé aubade:

Ils veulent enlever votre Célie.

Tru. Oh! Dieux!
Lér. Et sans doute bientôt ils viennent en ces lieux.
Demeurez, vous pourrez voir tout de la fenêtre.

Hé bien! qu'avais-je dit? les voyez-vous paraître? Chut, je veux à vos yeux leur en faire l'affront: Nous allons voir beau jeu, si la corde ne rompt.

SCÈNE VIII

LÉLIE, TRUFALDIN, MASCARILLE (masqué)

Tru. Oh! les plaisants robins qui pensent me surprendre!

Lét. Masques, où courez-vous? le pourrait-on apprendre?

Trufaldin, ouvrez-leur pour jouer un momon. Bon Dieu! qu'elle est jolie, et qu'elle a l'air mignon! Hé quoi? vous murmurez? mais sans vous faire outrage.

Peut-on lever le masque et voir votre visage?
Tru. Allez, fourbes méchants; retirez-vous d'ici,
Canaille; et vous, Seigneur, bonsoir, et grand
merci.

Léz. Mascarille, est-ce toi?

Mas. Nenni-da, c'est quelque autre.

will, I have two good pistols and a trusty sword with me. Hullo! a word with you, there.

Scene VII

LÉLIE, TRUFALDIN

TRU. What is it? who wants to see me? Lél. Fasten your door carefully to-night.

TRU. Why?

LÉL. Some fellows in masks are going to give you a sorry kind of a serenade; they mean to carry off vour Célie.

Tru. O Heavens!

Lél. They are certain to be here soon: stay where you are, you can see everything from that window. There now! what did I tell you? Do you not see them coming? Hush, I will go for them before your eyes: we shall see some fine sport if all goes well.

Scene VIII

LÉLIE, TRUFALDIN, MASCARILLE (masked)

TRU. Oh! the silly clowns to think of catching me napping!

Ler. Might I enquire where you masqueraders are bound? Let them in. Trufaldin, to play their tomfooleries. I say! what a pretty girl you make, you have a most fetching air! What are you trying to say? You won't take it amiss, will you, if I lift your mask and look at your face?

TRU. Get out, you rascals; off these premises, you curs: and good-night to you, Seigneur, and many thanks.

Lér. Is that you, Mascarille?

Mas. No, by no means, it is some one else.

L'EL. Hélas! quelle surprise! et quel sort est le nôtre!
L'aurais-je deviné, n'étant point averti
Des secrètes raisons qui l'avaient travesti?
Malheureux que je suis, d'avoir dessous ce masque
Été sans y penser te faire cette frasque!
Il me prendrait envie, en ce juste courroux,
De me battre moi-même et me donner cent coups.
Mas. Adieu, sublime esprit, rare imaginative.

Lér. Las! si de ton secours ta colère me prive, A quel saint me vouerai-je?

Mas. Au grand diable d'enfer. Lél. Ah! si ton cœur pour moi n'est de bronze ou de fer.

Qu'encore un coup, du moins, mon imprudence ait grâce:

S'il faut pour l'obtenir que tes genoux j'embrasse, Vois-moi . . .

Mas. Tarare. Allons, camarades, allons: J'entends venir des gens qui sont sur nos talons.

Scène IX

Léandre masqué, et sa suite, Trufaldin

Léa. Sans bruit! ne faisons rien que de la bonne sorte.
Tau. Quoi? masques toute nuit assiégeront ma porte?
Messieurs, ne gagnez point de rhumes à plaisir;
Tout cerveau qui le fait est certes de loisir:
Il est un peu trop tard pour enlever Célie;
Dispensez-l'en ce soir, elle vous en supplie:
La belle est dans le lit, et ne peut vous parler;
J'en suis fâché pour vous; mais pour vous régaler
Du souci qui pour elle ici vous inquiette,
Elle vous fait présent de cette cassolette.

Léa. Fi! cela sent mauvais, et je suis tout gâté: Nous sommes découverts, tirons de ce côté.

FIN DU TROISIÈME ACTE

Lél. Alas! what does this mean? Now what ill-luck has befallen us? How could I have guessed it. when you never let me know your secret reasons for your disguise? Unhappy man that I am, not to have guessed that the masquerade was some trick of yours! It makes me wish I could thrash myself.

Mas. Farewell, oh spirit sublime and imagination

Lél. Alas! if your anger deprives me of your aid, to what saint shall I appeal?

Mas. To the archdevil of hell.

LÉL. Ah! If your heart is not made of iron or stone forgive me for my indiscretion just once more: if I have to go down on my knees to beg mercy. behold me . . .

Mas. Fiddlesticks. Come along, lads, come on: there are other folk on our heels!

Scene IX

LÉANDRE masked, with his followers, TRUFALDIN

Léa. Keep quiet! Let us do nothing unseemly. TRU. What! Is my door to be besieged all night by masqueraders? Gentlemen, do not needlessly catch cold; you will have ample time for that sort of thing if you wish. It is rather too late to carry off Célie; she begs you to excuse her to-night: the dear creature is in bed and cannot speak with you. I am very sorry for you; but, as some slight recompense for the trouble to which you have put yourselves on her behalf she asks you to accept this bottle of perfume.

Léa. Ugh! how it stinks, I am messed all over. We are found out; come, let us away.

ACTE IV

Scène I

LÉLIE, MASCARILLE

Mas. Vous voilà fagoté d'une plaisante sorte. Lél. Tu ranimes par là mon espérance morte.

Mas. Toujours de ma colère on me voit revenir;
J'ai beau jurer, pester, je ne m'en puis tenir.
Lér. Aussi crois, si jamais je suis dans la puissance,
Que tu seras content de ma reconnaissance,
Et que, quand je n'aurais qu'un seul morceau de
pain . . .

Mas. Baste! Songez à vous dans ce nouveau dessein. Au moins, si l'on vous voit commettre une sottise, Vous n'imputerez plus l'erreur à la surprise : Votre rôle en ce jeu par cœur doit être su. Lér. Mais comment Trufaldin chez lui t'a-t-il recu? Mas. D'un zèle simulé j'ai bridé le bon sire : Avec empressement je suis venu lui dire, S'il ne songeait à lui, que l'on le surprendrait; Que l'on couchait en joue, et de plus d'un endroit, Celle dont il a vu qu'une lettre en avance Avait si faussement divulgué la naissance; Qu'on avait bien voulu m'y mêler quelque peu, Mais que j'avais tiré mon épingle du jeu ; Et que, touché d'ardeur pour ce qui le regarde, Je venais l'avertir de se donner de garde. De là, moralisant, j'ai fait de grands discours Sur les fourbes qu'on voit ici-bas tous les jours; Que pour moi, las du monde et de sa vie infâme, Je voulais travailler au salut de mon âme, A m'éloigner du trouble, et pouvoir longuement Près de quelque honnête homme être paisiblement; Que s'il le trouvait bon, je n'aurais d'autre envie

ACT IV

Scene I

Lélie, Mascarille

Mas. You look fine, dressed like that!

Ler. You have given me new hope when I thought all was over.

Mas. I always get over my fits of anger; I swear and

curse in vain: I can never keep it up.

Lél. Well, you may be sure that, if ever I have the power you shall never have cause to say I am ungrateful; if I have nothing but a crust of bread left . . .

Mas. Never mind about that, think now of our new plan. And, if you play the fool again, don't say you have not been told what to do: you must know your part by heart, this time.

LEL. But how did Trufaldin receive you?

Mas. My pretended zeal for his interests threw dust in the old boy's eyes. I told him emphatically that, unless he were very careful, he would be taken by surprise; that danger threatened him from more than one quarter in the matter of the slave-girl about whose birth he had received a forged letter; that attempts had been made to drag me into the business, but that I had evaded them; and that, moved by my friendly feeling towards him. I had come to warn him to be on his guard. From this, I proceeded to moralise, I held forth on the deceitfulness of this wicked world, more and more evident every day; that, as for myself, I was weary of the world and its wicked ways. I meant to set about the saving of my soul, to get away from all life's troubles and to dwell in peace for the rest of my days in the service of some worthy Que de passer chez lui le reste de ma vie; Et que même à tel point il m'avait su ravir, Que sans lui demander gages pour le servir, Je mettrais en ses mains, que je tenais certaines, Quelque bien de mon père et le fruit de mes peines, Dont, advenant que Dieu de ce monde m'ôtât, J'entendais tout de bon que lui seul héritât : C'était le vrai moyen d'acquérir sa tendresse, Et comme, pour résoudre avec votre maîtresse Des biais qu'on doit prendre à terminer vos vœux, Je voulais en secret vous aboucher tous deux. Lui-même a su m'ouvrir une voie assez belle De pouvoir hautement vous loger avec elle, Venant m'entretenir d'un fils privé du jour Dont cette nuit en songe il a vu le retour. A ce propos, voici l'histoire qu'il m'a dite, Et sur qui j'ai tantôt notre fourbe construite.

Lél. C'est assez, je sais tout: tu me l'as dit deux fois.

Mas. Oui, oui, mais quand j'aurais passé jusques à trois.

Peut-être encore qu'avec toute sa suffisance, Votre esprit manquera dans quelque circonstance. Lél. Mais à tant différer je me fais de l'effort.

Mas. Ah! de peur de tomber, ne courons pas si fort. Voyez-vous, vous avez la caboche un peu dure: Rendez-vous affermi dessus cette aventure. Autrefois Trufaldin de Naples est sorti, Et s'appelait alors Zanobio Ruberti; Un parti qui causa quelque émeute civile, Dont il fut seulement soupçonné dans sa ville (De fait, il n'est pas homme à troubler un État), L'obligea d'en sortir une nuit sans éclat. Une fille fort jeunc et sa femme laissées A quelque temps de là se trouvant trépassées, Il en eut la nouvelle et dans ce grand ennui, Voulant dans quelque ville emmener avec lui, Outre ses biens, l'espoir qui restait de sa race,

man: I added that, if it suited him, I should like nothing better than to pass the rest of my life with And, in order to show him the devotion I felt towards him, instead of asking him to pay me any wages, I would ask him to take care of some property of my father, together with my own savings, as I knew they would be safe in his hands. I mentioned that, should it please Heaven to take me hence, the property should be his alone. was a sure way to win his affection, and, while I was cogitating how to arrange for secret meetings with your mistress, so that you might bring matters to a successful issue, he himself provided an excellent way out of the difficulty, by means of which you will be able to stay openly under the same root with her. Whilst talking to me about his lost son, he told me that, the night before, he had dreamt this son came back to life. This is the tale he told me, and, on it, I have based fresh plans.

LEL. Never mind, I know it well; you have already

told it me twice.

Mas. Yes, that may be, but, even if I told it you a third time, I should not be surprised if, in spite of all your self-confidence, your memory were to fail you in some particular.

Lér. But it is such a nuisance to have to wait so

long.

Mas. Stay, not so fast, or you may fall. Your head is pretty dense, you know, and, therefore, you must know your part thoroughly. Trufaldin once lived in Naples under the name of Zanobio Ruberti; a seditious plot which developed into a civil insurection, in which he was suspected to have taken a part (although, as a matter of fact, he is not the kind of man to disturb any State), compelled him to leave the town secretly by night. He left behind him a daughter, very young, and his wife. Soon after, he heard that they were dead, and, in his great grief, he decided to remove his wealth to another town, where he could live with the only

Un sien fils écolier, qui se nommait Horace, Il écrit à Bologne, où pour mieux être instruit Un certain maître Albert jeune l'avait conduit ; Mais pour se joindre tous le rendez-vous qu'il donne Durant deux ans entiers ne lui fit voir personue; Si bien que les jugeant morts après ce temps-là, Il vint en cette ville, et prit le nom qu'il a, Sans que de cet Albert, ni de ce fils Horace, Douze ans aient découvert jamais la moindre trace. Voilà l'histoire en gros, redite seulement Afin de vous servir ici de fondement. Maintenant, vous serez un marchand d'Arménie. Qui les aurez vus sains l'un et l'autre en Turquie. Si j'ai plutôt qu'aucun un tel moyen trouvé, Pour les ressusciter sur ce qu'il a rêvé, C'est qu'en fait d'aventure il est très-ordinaire De voir gens pris sur mer par quelque Turc corsaire, Puis être à leur famille à point nommé rendus, Après quinze ou vingt ans qu'on les a crus perdus. Pour moi, j'ai vu déjà cent contes de la sorte : Sans nous alambiquer, servons-nous-en; qu'importe?

Vous leur aurez ouï leur disgrâce conter, Et leur aurez fourni de quoi se racheter; Mais que parti plus tôt, pour chose nécessaire, Horace vous chargea de voir ici son père, Dont il a su le sort, et chez qui vous devez Attendre quelques jours qu'ils seraient arrivés: Je vous ai fait tantôt des leçons étendues.

Lél. Ces répétitions ne sont que superflues:
Dès l'abord mon esprit a compris tout le fait.
Mas. Je m'en vais là dedans donner le premier trait.
Lél. Écoute, Mascarille, un seul point me chagrine:
S'il allait de son fils me demander la mine?

remaining hope of his race, his son Horace, a schoolboy. He accordingly wrote to Bologna. where the boy had been sent to a tutor of the name of Albert, to receive a better education. But, in spite of the various meeting-places he arranged, his efforts were unsuccessful; and, finally, after waiting for two long years, believing they must be dead, he came here to this town and adopted his present name. Twelve years have gone by, and he has not come across any trace either of Albert or of this son Horace. That is, roughly, the story, and I have repeated it to you solely so that you may understand the main outlines of my plot. Now, you are to be an Armenian merchant and you have seen them both alive and well in Turkey. If I choose this method of bringing them to life again rather than any other, after Trufaldin's dream, it is because in matters of adventure it is very common to find people taken captive at sea by Turkish corsairs, and restored to their families later, at a suitable opportunity, after a lapse of fifteen or twenty years, during which they have been deemed lost. I must have read scores of tales like that: and it will serve our purpose without putting us to the trouble of inventing anything fresh. What does it matter so long as it succeeds? You will have heard from their lips of their humiliating condition as slaves, and you lent them money with which to buy their freedom. But, as you had to set off at once on urgent business, Horace deputed you to see his father, whose condition he knows, and to wait for you in his father's house for a few days until they arrive: now, surely, I have drilled your part into you.

LEL. These repetitions are quite superfluous. understood all there was to do from the first.

Mas. I will go in then and set things going.

Lel. Stay, Mascarille, one point worries me; suppose he asks me to tell him what his son looks like? Mas. Belle difficulté! devez-vous pas savoir Qu'il était fort petit alors qu'il l'a pu voir ? Et puis, outre cela, le temps et l'esclavage Pourraient-ils pas avoir changé tout son visage? Lél. Il est vrai; mais, dis-moi, s'il connaît qu'il m'a vu,

Que faire?

MAS. De mémoire êtes-vous dépourvu? Nous avons dit tantôt qu'outre que votre image N'avait dans son esprit pu faire qu'un passage, Pour ne vous avoir vu que durant un moment, Et le poil et l'habit déguisaient grandement.

Fort bien; mais, à propos, cet endroit de Turquie ...?

Mas. Tout, vous dis-je, est égal, Turquie ou Barbarie.

Lél. Mais le nom de la ville où j'aurai pu les voir?

Mas. Tunis. Il me tiendra, je crois, jusques au soir:

La répétition, dit-il, est inutile,

Et j'ai déjà nommé douze fois cette ville.

Lér. Va, va-t'en commencer; il ne me faut plus rien.

Mas. Au moins, soyez prudent, et vous conduisez

Ne donnez point ici de l'imaginative.

Lér. Laisse-moi gouverner : que ton âme est craintive!

Mas. Horace dans Bologne écolier, Trufaldin Zanobio Ruberti, dans Naples citadin; Le précepteur Albert . .

Ah! c'est me faire honte Que de me tant prêcher: suis-je un sot à ton conte?

Mas. Non pas du tout, mais bien quelque choseapprochant.

LÉL. (seul). Quand il m'est inutile il fait le chien couchant;

Mais parce qu'il sent bien le secours qu'il me donne,

Mas. That's as easy as winking! Don't you remember that he was a little boy when his father saw him last? Besides, in addition to that, time and slavery will have completely changed his looks.

Ler. Of course; but, tell me, if he recognises me

when he sees me, what shall I do?

Mas. Are you absolutely devoid of memory? Have I not told you over and over again that, as he only caught a momentary glimpse of you, he will not remember your face, and your beard and dress disguise you finely?

LEL. Very good; but, tell me, what part of Turkey . . .?

Mas. Oh! it's all one, whether Turkey or Barbary.

LEL. What is the name of the town where I saw them?

Mas. Tunis. Really, you will keep me here all day long: you tell me not to tell you anything twice over, and I have already told you the name of the town a dozen times.

Lél. Go on then, and let us set to work: I have

everything I want now.

Mas. Now, do be careful and behave sensibly; do not give rein to your imagination this time.

LÉL. Trust me to manage things; you are such a timid creature.

Mas. Horace, a schoolboy in Bologna; Trufaldin, Zanobio Ruberti, a citizen of Naples; Albert a tutor . . .

Lél. Ah! you are simply humiliating me by your continual preachings: do you take me for a fool?

Mas. Not altogether, but something very like it.

Lél. (alone). When I have no use for him he cringes like a dog; but when he knows the full value of the help he is giving me his insolence knows no Sa familiarité jusque-là s'abandonne.
Je vais être de près éclairé des beaux yeux
Dont la force m'impose un joug si précieux;
Je m'en vais sans obstacle, avec des traits de
flamme,

Peindre à cette beauté les tourments de mon âme : Je saurai quel arrêt je dois . . . Mais les voici.

Scene II

Trufaldin, Lélie, Mascarille

Tru. Sois béni, juste Ciel, de mon sort adouci.

Mas. C'est à vous de rêver et de faire des songes, Puisqu'en vous il est faux que songes sont mensonges.

Tru. Quelle grâce, quels biens vous rendrai-je, Seigneur,

Vous, que je dois nommer l'ange de mon bonheur? Lér. Ce sont soins superflus, et je vous en dispense.

Tru. J'ai, je ne sais pas où, vu quelque ressemblance De cet Arménien.

Mas. C'est ce que je disois ;
Mais on voit des rapports admirables parfois.
Tru. Vous avez vu ce fils vu mon espoir se fonde?

Léz. Oui, seigneur Trufaldin: le plus gaillard du monde.

Tru. Il vous a dit sa vie, et parlé fort de moi?

Lél. Plus de dix mille fois.

Mas. Quelque peu moins, je croi.

LÉL. Il vous a dépeint tel que je vous vois paraître, Le visage, le port . . .

TRU. Cela pourrait-il être,

Si lorsqu'il m'a pu voir il n'avait que sept ans, Et si son précepteur même depuis ce temps Aurait peine à pouvoir connaître mon visage? bounds. However, I shall soon be looking into those beauteous eyes which have thrown such a delicious spell over me; I am now, without let or hindrance, going to paint to her in glowing colours the torments of love I am suffering for her. I shall know then what fate I must . . . But here they come.

Scene II

TRUFALDIN, LÉLIE, MASCARILLE

TRU. The heavens be praised for this blessed change in my fortune.

Mas. You are the man to dream dreams and see visions, since in your case they come true.

Tru. What thanks, what return can I make you, Seigneur, for being the bearer of such good tidings?

Léz. Thanks are superfluous, and I absolve you from the necessity of returning them.

TRU. I have seen some one like this Armenian, although I cannot say where.

Mas. That was just what I was thinking myself, but one sometimes sees remarkable resemblances.

Tru. You have seen this son of mine, the desire of my heart?

Let. Yes, Signor Trufaldin: and a most excellent young fellow he is.

Tru. He told you the story of his life, and spoke much about me?

Lél. Thousands and thousands of times.

Mas. I should not think quite so often.

Lél. He described you to me exactly as you look now, face, bearing . . .

Tru. How could he do that, as he has not seen me since he was seven years old; even his tutor could hardly remember my face after such a long time.

Mas. Le sang bien autrement conserve cette image: Par des traits si profonds ce portrait est tracé, Que mon père...

Tru. Suffit. Où l'avez-vous laissé? Léz. En Turquie, à Turin. Tru. Turin? mais cette ville

Est, je pense, en Piedmont.

Mas. Oh! cerveau malhabile!
Vous ne l'entendez pas: il veut dire Tunis,
Et c'est eu effet là qu'il laissa votre fils;
Mais les Arméniens ont tous une habitude,
Certain vice de langue à nous autres fort rude:
C'est que dans tous les mots ils changent nis en rin,
Et pour dire Tunis, ils prononcent Turin.
Tru. Il fallait, pour l'entendre, avoir cette lumière.

Quel moyen vous dit-il de rencontrer son père?

Mas. Voyez s'il répondra. Je repassais un peu Quelque leçon d'escrime; autrefois en ce jeu Il n'était point d'adresse à mon adresse égale, Et j'ai battu le fer en mainte et mainte salle.

Tru. Ce n'est pas maintenant ce que je veux savoir.

Quel autre nom dit-il que je devais avoir?

Mas. Ah! Seigneur Zanobio Ruberti, quelle joie Est celle maintenant que le Ciel vous envoie!

Lél. C'est là votre vrai nom, et l'autre est emprunté.

Tru. Mais où vous a-t-il dit qu'il reçut la clarté? Mas. Naples est un séjour qui paraît agréable; Mais pour vous ce doit être un lieu fort haïssable. Tru. Ne peux-tu sans parler souffrir notre discours?

Lér. Dans Naples son destin a commencé son cours. Tru. Où l'envoyai-je jeune, et sous quelle conduite?

Mas. Ce pauvre maître Albert a beaucoup de mérite D'avoir depuis Bologne accompagné ce fils, Qu'à sa discrétion vos soins avaient commis, Tru. Ah!





relety, betatalla relety, betatalla

Mas. There is a kinship in blood which preserves the memory of family likenesses in a wonderful way. A likeness of this nature is so deeply imprinted that my father . . .

TRU. Hold your tongue. Where did you leave him?

Lel. In Turkey, at Turin.

TRU. Turin? but that town, I think, is in Piedmont.

Mas. Oh! the blockhead! You have not understood him: he means Tunis, it was certainly there that he left your son; but all Armenians pronounce badly, and their manner of speaking sounds very uncouth in our ears: they always change nis into rin, and so Tunis they pronounce like Turin.

I'au. I am glad to know this, in order to understand him. How did he tell you you would find his father?

Mas. What will he say to that? I was just practising a pass or two, as we do in fencing. Formerly, there did not exist my equal at this sport. I have handled the foils in many a fencing bout.

Tru. That does not interest me just now. What name did he tell you I went by?

Mas. Ah! Seigneur Zanobio Ruberti, how happy heaven has made you!

Lex. That is your true name, the other is the one you borrowed.

Tau. And where did he tell you he was born?

Mas. Naples sounds a delightful place to live in, but it must have very unpleasant memories for you.

Tru. Can you not hold your tongue and let us two talk together?

LEL. It was in Naples that he first saw light.

Tru. Where did I send him when he was a boy, and under whose guardianship?

Mas. Poor maître Albert is much to be commended for the care he took of your son ever since he had charge of him in Bologna.

TRU. Ah!

Mas. Nous sommes perdus, si cet entretien dure.

TRU. Je voudrais bien savoir de vous leur aventure:
Sur quel vaisseau le sort qui m'a su travailler...
MAS. Je ne sais ce que c'est, je ne fais que bâiller;
Mais, seigneur Trufaldin, songez-vous que peut-

Ce Monsieur l'étranger a besoin de repaître, Et qu'il est tard aussi?

LÉL. Pour moi, point de repas.

Mas. Ah! vous avez plus faim que vous ne pensez

Tru. Entrez donc.

LÉL. Après vous.

Mas. Monsieur, en Arménie,

Les maîtres du logis sont sans cérémonie.

Pauvre esprit! pas deux mots!

Lél. D'abord il m'a surpris.

Mais n'appréhende plus, je reprends mes esprits,

Et m'en vais débiter avecque hardiesse...

Mas. Voici notre rival, qui ne sait pas la pièce.

Scène III

Léandre, Anselme

Ans. Arrêtez-vous, Léandre, et souffrez un discours
Qui cherche le repos et l'honneur de vos jours:
Je ne vous parle point en père de ma fille,
En homme intéressé pour ma propre famille,
Mais comme votre père ému pour votre bien,
Sans vouloir vous flatter et vous déguiser rien,
Bref, comme je voudrais, d'une âme franche et
pure,

Que l'on fit à mon sang en pareille aventure. Savez-vous de quel œil chacun voit cet amour, Qui dedans une nuit vient d'éclater au jour? A combien de discours et de traits de risée Mas. We are undone, if this cross-examination lasts much longer.

Tru. I should so much like to know all about their adventures; on what vessel did my adverse fate...

Mas. I do not know what is the matter with me, I do nothing but yawn; seigneur Trufaldin, don't you think that this stranger may be in need of a little refreshment? it is getting late.

LÉL. I do not want anything.

Mas. Ah! You are hungrier than you think.

Tru. Come in. Lél. After you.

Mas. In Armenia, monsieur, the master of the house dispenses with ceremony. You miserable wretch! Haven't you a single word to say for yourself!

Lél. He surprised me at first, but do not be anxious, I have collected myself and I am now going to rattle on finely.

Mas. Here is our rival, who knows nothing of our scheme.

Scene III

Léandre, Anselme

Ans. Stay, Léandre, and let me speak to you about something which concerns your peace of mind and reputation: I have not come to speak to you in this matter simply as the father of my daughter, and only interested in things that affect my own family, but as your own father would speak to you, thinking only of your good, without wishing to flatter or hide anything from you, exactly as I should like any well-meaning man to speak to one of my own flesh and blood in similar circumstances. Do you know what everybody thinks of this love affair of yours which has suddenly become the talk of the town?

Votre entreprise d'hier est partout exposée? Quel jugement on fait du choix capricieux Qui pour femme, dit-on, vous désigne en ces lieux Un rebut de l'Égypte, une fille coureuse, De qui le noble emploi n'est qu'un métier de gueuse?

J'en ai rougi pour vous, encor plus que pour moi, Qui me trouve compris dans l'éclat que je voi, Moi, dis-je, dont la fille, à vos ardeurs promise, Ne peut sans quelque affront souffrir qu'on la

méprise.

Ah! Léandre, sortez de cet abaissement; Ouvrez un peu les yeux sur votre aveuglement. Si notre esprit n'est pas sage à toutes les heures, Les plus courtes erreurs sont toujours les meilleures.

Quand on ne prend en dot que la seule beauté, Le remords est bien près de la solennité, Et la plus belle femme a très-peu de défense Contre cette tiédeur qui suit la jouissance: Je vous le dis encor, ces bouillants mouvements, Ces ardeurs de jeunesse et ces emportements Nous font trouver d'abord quelques nuits agréables:

Mais ces félicités ne sont guère durables, Et notre passion alentissant son cours, Après ces bonnes nuits donnent de mauvais jours. De là viennent les soins, les soucis, les misères, Les fils déshérités par le courroux des pères.

Léa. Dans tout votré discours je n'ai rien écouté Que mon esprit déjà ne m'ait représenté. Je sais combien je dois à cet honneur insigne Que vous me voulez faire, et dont je suis indigne, Et vois, malgré l'effort dont je suis combattu, Ce que vaut votre fille et quelle est sa vertu: Aussi veux-je tâcher...

Ans. On ouvre cette porte:
Retirons-nous plus loin, de crainte qu'il n'en sorte
Quelque secret poison dont vous seriez surpris.

that your exploit of yesterday is held up to ridicule and talked about everywhere? that you are condemned on all hands for your absurd choice of a wife in the person of a gypsy outcast, a streetwalker, whose honourable occupation is the trade of begging? I have blushed for you much more than for myself, though I am dragged into the matter too, having promised you my daughter's hand because of your earnest entreaty. I cannot suffer her to be despised without also myself feeling the insult. Ah! Léandre, release yourself from this humiliating position; open your eyes to your blind infatuation. None of us is always wise, but brief mistakes are soonest mended. When a man receives no dowry than that of beauty in his wife, he repents soon after the wedding ceremony is over, and the best-looking woman has but few means of defence against the indifference that soon takes the place of infatuation. I tell you again, these unbalanced raptures, these youthful longings and these transports may give us, at first, a few enjoyable nights, but this kind of happiness is not lasting, and, when our passion cools, disagreeable days follow the pleasant nights. Care, anxiety, misery follow sons disinherited by parents' wrath.

Léa. There is nothing in all you have said that has not also occurred to me. I know how much I am obliged to you for the signal honour you do me, but I am unworthy of it. In spite of the chains with which I am bound I am conscious of your daughter's worth and virtues: therefore I wish to try . . .

Ans. Some one is opening that door: let us get away, lest some subtle poison should float out and over-

power you.

Scène IV

LÉLIE, MASCARILLE

Mas. Bientôt de notre fourbe on verra le débris, Si vous continuez des sottises si grandes. Lél. Dois-je éternellement our tes réprimandes? De quoi te peux-tu plaindre? Ai-je pas réussi En tout ce que j'ai dit depuis . . .?

En tout ce que j'ai dit depuis . . . !

Mas.

Coussi, cous

As.

Coussi, coussi:

Témoin les Turcs, par vous appelés hérétiques,

Et que vous assurez, par serments authentiques,

Adorer pour leurs dieux la lune et le soleil.

Passe: ce qui me donne un dépit nompareil,

C'est qu'ici votre amour étrangement s'oublie

Près de Célie: il est ainsi que la bouillie,

Qui par un trop grand feu s'enfle, croît jusqu'aux

bords.

Et de tous les côtés se répand au dehors. Lét. Pourrait-on se forcer à plus de retenue? Je ne l'ai presque point encore entretenue. Mas. Oui, mais ce n'est pas tout que de ne parler pas:

pas: Par vos gestes, durant un moment de repas, Vous avez aux soupçons donné plus de matière, Que d'autres ne feraient dans une année entière.

LÉL. Et comment donc?

Mas. Comment? chacun a pu le voir.
A table, où Trufaldin l'oblige de se seoir,
Vous n'avez toujours fait qu'avoir les yeux sur
elle.

Rouge, tout interdit, jouant de la prunelle, Sans prendre jamais garde à ce qu'on vous servait, Vous n'aviez point de soif qu'alors qu'elle buvait, Et dans ses propres mains vous saisissant du verre, Sans le vouloir rincer, sans rien jeter à terre, Vous buviez sur son reste, et montriez d'affecter Le côté qu'à sa bouche elle avait su porter. Sur les morceaux touchés de sa main délicate,

Scene IV

LÉLIE, MASCARILLE

Mas. Our stratagem will soon fall to pieces if you go on making such idiotic blunders.

LÉL. Am I eternally to put up with your reprimands? Now what are you complaining about? Have I not

said everything I ought ever since . . .?

Mas. You have barely passed muster: for instance, you called Turks heretics, and you solemnly swore that they worshipped the sun and the moon. However, we will let that pass; what annoys me beyond bearing is to see the wretched way you forget vourself, when with Célie: your passion is like the contents of a saucepan over a hot fire, it bubbles up to the brim and then flows over on all sides.

Lér. I do not think any one could have been more

reserved. I have hardly yet spoken to her.
Mas. That may be, but talking is not the only means of expression. You aroused more suspicion by your actions in a single moment at table than others would have done in a full year.

Lét. In what way?

Mas. Why, any one could see it. As soon as Trufaldin had led you to your seats at the table, you fixed your eyes on her face, and never took them off. You blushed, and looked confused, and ogled her, without ever looking at what was given you. You only felt thirsty when she drank, and then you seized the glass out of her very hands and, without waiting to rinse it out, or throwing any of it away. you drank what she had left, showing plainly you chose the side her lips had pressed. You pawed the morsels her delicate hands had touched or her teeth had bitten, worse than a cat does a mouse.

Ou mordus de ses dents, vous étendiez la patte Plus brusquement qu'un chat dessus une souris, Et les avaliez tout ainsi que des pois gris. Puis, outre tout cela, vous faisiez sous la table Un bruit, un triquetrac de pieds insupportable, Dont Trufaldin, heurté de deux coups trop pressants.

A puni par deux fois deux chiens très-innocents, Qui, s'ils eussent osé, vous eussent fait querelle. Et puis après cela votre conduite est belle? Pour moi, j'en ai souffert la gêne sur mon corps; Malgré le froid, je sue encor de mes efforts: Attaché dessus vous, comme un joueur de boule Après le mouvement de la sienne qui roule, Je pensais retenir toutes vos actions, En faisant de mon corps mille contorsions.

Lér. Mon Dieu! qu'il t'est aisé de condamner des choses

Dont tu ne ressens point les agréables causes! Je veux bien néanmoins, pour te plaire une fois, Faire force à l'amour qui m'impose des lois: Désormais...

Scène V

Lélie, Mascarille, Trufaldin

Mas. Nous parlions des fortunes d'Horace. Tru. C'est bien fait. Cependant me ferez-vous la grâce

Que je puisse lui dire un seul mot en secret? Lél. Il faudrait autrement être fort indiscret. Tru. Écoute, sais-tu bien ce que je viens de faire? Mas. Non, mais si vous voulez, je ne tarderai guère, Sans doute, à le savoir.

Tru. D'un chêne grand et fort,
Dont près de deux cents ans ont fait déjà le sort,
Je viens de détacher une branche admirable,
Choisie expressément, de grosseur raisonnable,
Dont j'ai fait sur-le-champ, avec beaucoup d'ardeur,

and swallowed them just like a glutton. Then, besides all this, you made such an insufferable clatter shuffling your feet under the table that Trufaldin, who twice felt the weight of your boots, punished a couple of innocent dogs for the kicks you had twice given him and, if the dogs had dared, they would have picked a quarrel with you. And after all that, you say your behaviour was irreproachable? I was on tenterhooks the whole time and, notwithstanding the cold I am still in a sweat when I think of what I endured. I hung on your movements just as a player follows the course of his ball. I wriggled like an eel in trying to guide your actions.

Lér. Ah! how easy it is for you to find fault with things, when you do not understand the pleasure they give! I am quite willing, however, in order once more to satisfy you, to put a restraint on the love which tyrannises over me: Henceforth...

Scene V

LÉLIE, MASCARILLE, TRUFALDIN

Mas. We were speaking of the affairs of your son Horace.

Tru. I see. Would you be so good as to let me have a word with him in private?

Lél. It would be very rude of me to refuse.

TRU. Listen. Do you know what I have just done? MAS. No, but if you have a mind to it, it will pro-

bably not be long before I do.

Tru. I have just cut off from a big and sturdy oaktree, nearly two hundred years old, a stout cudgel, pretty thick, say about so . . . yes, quite as thick as that, which I took keen pleasure in fashioning at once into a stick, less at one end than the other, Un bâton à peu près . . . oui, de cette grandeur; Moins gros par l'un des bouts, mais plus que trente gaules

Propre, comme je pense, à rosser les épaules, Car il est bien en main, vert, noueux et massif. Mas. Mais pour qui, je vous prie, un tel préparatif?

Tru. Pour toi premièrement; puis pour ce bon apôtre, Qui veut m'en donner d'une et m'en jouer d'une autre.

Pour cet Arménien, ce marchand déguisé, Introduit sous l'appas d'un conte supposé. Mas. Quoi? vous ne croyez pas . . .? Tru. Ne cherche point d'excuse:

Lui-même heureusement a découvert sa ruse,
Et disant à Célie, en lui serrant la main,
Que pour elle il venait sous ce prétexte vain,
Il n'a pas aperçu Jeannette, ma fillole,
Laquelle a tout oui parole pour parole;
Et je ne doute point, quoiqu'il n'en ait rien dit,
Que tu ne sois de tout le complice maudit.
Mas. Ah! vous me faites tort! S'il faut qu'on vous
affronte.

Croyez qu'il m'a trompé le premier à ce conte.
Tru. Veux-tu me faire voir que tu dis vérité?
Qu'à le chasser mon bras soit du tien assisté:
Donnons-en à ce fourbe et du long et du large,
Et de tout crime après mon esprit te décharge.
Mass Oui-da, très-volontiers, je l'épousterai bien,
Et par là vous verrez que je n'y trempe en rien.
Ah! vous serez rossé, Monsieur de l'Arménie,
Qui toujours gâtez tout.

Scène VI

Lélie, Trufaldin, Mascarille

Tru. Un mot, je vous supplie.

Donc, Monsieur l'imposteur, vous osez aujourd'hui
Duper un honnête homme et vous jouer de lui?

but capable of doing more execution when giving any one a jolly good hiding than a score of flimsy switches, for it is easy to hold, green, knotty and heavy.

Mas. But for whom, may I ask, have you prepared

TRU. First of all, for you; then for that young scoundrel, who would foist some one on me, and seduce me of some one else; lastly, for this Armenian, this disguised merchant, who has come here by false pretences.

MAS. What? You do not believe . . .?

Tru. You need not try to find an excuse. Fortunately he revealed his own plot by telling Célie, whilst he was squeezing her hand, that it was on her account he had come in this ridiculous disguise. He did not notice my little god-daughter, Jeannette, who heard every word he said. Although he has not said anything about it, I have no doubt at all that you are his accursed accomplice.

Mas. Ah! you wrong me! If you have really been taken in, believe me that he imposed upon me first

by his tale.

Tru. Do you wish to prove to me that you are telling the truth? Help me to turn him out; help me to drub the villain black and blue and then I will acquit you of any share in the rascality.

Mas. Certainly; nothing would please me better. I will dust his jacket so thoroughly that you will soon have no doubt about my innocence in the matter. Ah! Monsieur de l'Arménie, you shall be well tanned for always spoiling sport.

Scene VI

Lélie, Trufaldin, Mascarille

Tru. I want a word with you. So, Monsieur impostor, you have the audacity to dupe an honest man, and make game of him?

Mas. Feindre avoir vu son fils en une autre contrée, Pour vous donner chez lui plus aisément entrée?

TRU. Vidons, vidons sur l'heure.

Lél. Ah! coquin!

Mas. C'est ainsi Que les fourbes . . .

Lél. Bourreau!

Mas. . . . sont ajustés ici.

Garde-moi bien cela.

Lél. Quoi donc? je serais homme . . . Mas. Tirez, tirez, vous dis-je, ou bien je vous assomme.

TRU. Voilà qui me plaît fort; rentre, je suis content.

L'aurait-on pu prévoir, l'action de ce traître, Qui vient însolemment de maltraiter son maître?

Mas. Peut-on vous demander comme va votre dos? Lél. Quoi? tu m'oses encore tenir un tel propos? Mas. Voilà, voilà que c'est de ne voir pas Jeannette, Et d'avoir en tout temps une langue indiscrette; Mais pour cette fois-ci je n'ai point de courroux, Je cesse d'éclater, de pester contre vous: Quoique de l'action l'imprudence soit haute, Ma main sur votre échine a lavé votre faute.

Lél. Ah! je me vengerai de ce trait déloyal.

Mas. Vous vous êtes causé vous-même tout le mal. Lél. Moi?

Mas. Si vous n'étiez pas une cervelle folle, Quand vous avez parlé naguère à votre idole, Vous auriez aperçu Jeannette sur vos pas, Dont l'oreille subtile a découvert le cas. Lél. On aurait pu surprendre un mot dit à Célie?

Mas. Et d'où doncques viendrait cette prompte

Mas. And you pretend to have seen his son in another country so as to gain entrance more easily into his house?

TRU. Clear out, leave this house immediately.

Lél. Ah! you villain.

Mas. This is the way that rogues . . .

Lél. Scoundrel!

Mas. Are treated here. Take that, and remember who gave it you!

Ler. But I am not a child . . .

Mas. Get out! Get out! I tell you or I will beat you to a pulp.

TRU. That is just what I like; come in, I am quite

~ satisfied.

Lér. What? Am I to be publicly thrashed by a footman? Who could have expected that the treacherous fellow would have thus impudently mauled his master?

Mas. May I venture to inquire if your back is sore?

LÉL. How dare you speak to me like that?

Mas. There, there, you see now what you have got through not noticing Jeannette, and through indulging in a rash tongue at all times and seasons; but I am not angry with you this time, I won't curse and swear at you; although your conduct has been the height of imprudence, I have curried the fault off your skin.

Lél. Ah! I will have my revenge for this treacherous

conduct.

Mas. You are yourself the cause of the whole trouble. Let. 1?

Mas. If you were not such an addle-pate, you would have seen that Jeannette was close to you, listening with all her ears to overhear what you were saying to your idol.

LÉL. Could any one really have heard a word of what

I said to Célie?

Mas. What other explanation can there be of your being so promptly kicked out of the house? Of

Oui, vous n'étes dehors que par votre caquet : Je ne sais si souvent vous jouez au piquet, Mais, au moins, faites-vous des écarts admirables.

Lél. Oh! le plus malheureux de tous les misérables!

Mais encore, pourquoi me voir chassé par toi?

Mas. Je ne fis jamais mieux que d'en prendre l'emploi:

Par la j'empêche au moins que de cet artifice Je ne sois soupçonné d'être auteur ou complice. Lél. Tu devais donc, pour toi, frapper plus douce-

ment.

Mas. Quelque sot! Trufaldin lorgnait exactement;

Et puis je vous dirai, sous ce prétexte utile

Je n'étais point fâché'd'évaporer ma bile:

Enfin la chose est faite, et si j'ai votre foi
Qu'on ne vous verra point vouloir venger sur moi,
Soit ou directement ou par quelque autre voie,
Les coups sur votre râble assenés avec joie,
Je vous promets, aidé par le poste où je suis,
De contenter vos vœux avant qu'il soit deux nuits.

Qu'est-ce que dessus moi ne peut cette promesse?

Mas. Vous le promettez donc?

LÉL. Oui, je te le promets.

Mas. Ce n'est pas encore tout, promettez que jamais

Vous ne vous mêlerez dans quoi que j'entreprenne.

Lél. Quoique ton traitement ait eu trop de rudesse,

Lél. Soit.

Mas. Si vous y manquez, votre fièvre quartaine!

Lél. Mais tiens-moi donc parole, et songe à mon repos.
Mas. Allez quitter l'habit et graisser votre dos.

Lél. Faut-il que le malheur qui me suit à la trace Me fasse voir toujours disgrâce sur disgrâce?
Mas. Quoi? vous n'êtes pas loin? sortez vite d'ici; course, you were turned out of doors because of your own chattering; I do know whether you often play at piquet, but you are certainly an adept at throwing out your best cards.

LEL. Oh! I am the most unlucky of all men! But why did you drive me away?

Mas. I never undertook a more useful part; for, by that means, I was not suspected of being either author or accessory to the subterfuge.

Lél. Well, you needn't have hit me quite so hard.

Mas. I wasn't such a fool as to lay it on gently! Trufaldin was spying everything; besides, I must admit that I was not sorry to have such a good excuse for letting off my own anger. It doesn't matter, now the thrashing is over; and if only you will pledge your word not to take revenge on me, whether directly or indirectly, for the tanning I gave your hide with such keen pleasure, I promise you that, by the help of the situation I am in here, I will satisfy your desires within the next two nights.

Lér. Although you handled me so roughly, yet I will submit to anything for such a promise.

Mas. You promise, then?

Lél. Yes, I promise.

Mas. Even that is not enough; you must promise that you will never again meddle in any of my schemes.

Lél. I promise.

Mas. If you break your word may the plague seize you!

Ler. But mind you keep yours with me, and remember how anxious I am.

Mas. Go and take off your clothes and rub some ointment on your back.

Lél. Will ill-luck always dog my steps and heap upon me one trouble after another?

Mas. What? have you not gone yet? Get out of

Mais surtout gardez-vous de prendre aucun souci: Puisque je fais pour vous, que cela vous suffise; N'aidez point mon projet de la moindre entreprise...

Demeurez en repos.

Lér. Oui, va, je m'y tiendrai. Mas. Il faut voir maintenant quel'biais je prendrai.

Scène VII

ERGASTE, MASCARILLE

Erc. Mascarille, je viens te dire une nouvelle Qui donne à tes desseins une atteinte cruelle : A l'heure que je parle, un jeune égyptien, Qui n'est pas noir pourtant, et sent assez son bien, Arrive accompagné d'une vieille fort hâve. Et vient chez Trufaldin racheter cette esclave Que vous vouliez. Pour elle il paraît fort zélé. Mas. Sans doute, c'est l'amant dont Célie a parlé. Fut-il jamais destin plus brouillé que le nôtre? Sortant d'un embarras, nous entrons dans un autre. En vain nous apprenons que Léandre est au point De quitter la partie et ne nous troubler point; Que son père, arrivé contre toute espérance, Du côté d'Hippolyte emporte la balance; Qu'il a tout fait changer par son autorité, Et va dès aujourd'hui conclure le traité: Lorsqu'un rival s'éloigne, un autre plus funeste S'en vient nous enlever tout l'espoir qui nous reste. Toutefois, par un trait merveilleux de mon art, Je crois que je pourrai retarder leur départ, Et me donner le temps qui sera nécessaire Pour tâcher de finir cette fameuse affaire. Il s'est fait un grand vol; par qui, l'on n'en sait Eux autres rarement passent pour gens de bien :

Je veux adroitement, sur un soupçon frivole, Faire pour quelques jours emprisonner ce drôle. this, and take good care you do not think of anything: I have your case in hand, let that suffice; do not... make the least attempt to assist me... but keep quiet.

LÉL. All right; I will be very careful.

Mas. Now I must think what course to take.

Scene VII.

ERGASTE, MASCARILLE

Erg. Mascarille, I have to tell you some news which will deal a cruel blow to your plans. Even while I am talking to you, a young gipsy who, however, has not a dark complexion, and who looks well to do, has arrived, accompanied by a very haggard-looking old woman, and he is going to Trufaldin's to buy the slave-girl you desire to possess. He

seems very eager to get hold of her.

Mas. No doubt it is the lover Célie talks about. Were ever fortunes so cross-grained as ours? No sooner are we out of one difficulty than we fall into another. What is the good of our hearing that Léandre is on the point of abandoning his quest and will not trouble us any further; that his father's "unexpected appearance on the scenes has turned the scales in favour of Hippolyte; that, using his parental authority, everything is changed and the marriage contract is to be concluded to-day: as soon as one rival makes himself scarce another and a more formidable one appears to crush all the hope we had left. However, I think I can delay their departure, by means of an excellent device, and that will give me the time I want to carry this fine business through. There has just been a great robbery, but by whom committed no one knows. These fellows have not generally a reputation for honesty, so I will manage somehow

Je sais des officiers de justice altérés Qui sont pour de tels coups de vrais délibérés : Dessus l'avide espoir de quelque paraguante, Il n'est rien que leur art aveuglément ne tente, Et du plus innocent, toujours à leur profit, La bourse est criminelle, et paye son délit.

FIN DU QUATRIÈME ACTE

ACTE V

Scène I

MASCARILLE, ERGASTE

Mas. Ah chien! ah double chien! mâtine de cervelle
Ta persécution sera-t-elle éternelle?
Enc. Par les soins vigilants, de l'exempt Balafre,
Ton affaire allait bien, le drôle était coffré,
Si ton maître au moment ne fût venu lui-même,
En vrai désespéré, rompre ton stratagème:
'Je ne saurais souffrir, a-t-il dit hautement,
Qu'un honnête homme soit traîné honteusement;
J'en réponds sur sa mine, et je le cautionne';
Et comme on résistait à lâcher sa personne,
D'abord il a chargé si bien sur les recors,
Qui sont gens d'ordinaire à craindre pour leurs
corps,

Qu'à l'heure que je parle ils sont encore en fuite, Et pensent tous avoir un Lélie à leur suite. Mas. Le traître ne sait pas que cet Égyptien Est déjà là dedans pour lui ravir son bien.

Erg. Adieu: certaine affaire à te quitter m'oblige.

to set suspicion to work, and get the fellow shut up in prison for a few days. I know some corrupt police officers who do not think twice about these matters. In the greedy hope of a bribe there is nothing they will not swallow with their eyes shut, be the accused ever so innocent, the purse is always guilty when there is profit to be made, and must pay for the crime.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT

ACT V

Scene I

MASCARILLE, ERGASTE

Mas. Brute! beast!! blockheaded ass!!! Will you never leave off bothering me?

Eng. Balafré, the police-officer, was doing your business excellently, and the fellow would have been caught, had not your master appeared just at the moment, and, like a lunatic, upset your scheme: 'I will not stand by and see an honest man treated so shamefully,' he cried out; 'his very looks show the sort of man he is: I will go bail,' and as they were not willing to give the man up, he fell on the constables so furiously that, being usually folks who take good care of their skins, they are even now still running, and each of them thinks he has a Lelie after him.

Mas. The idiot does not not know that this gypsy is already in the house for the purpose of carrying off his property.

Erc. Farewell: I have some business on hand which

compels me to leave you.

Mas. Oui, je suis stupéfait de ce dernier prodige:
"On dirait, et pour moi j'en suis persuadé,
Que ce démon brouillon dont il est possédé
Se plaise à me braver, et me l'aille conduire
Partout où sa présence est capable de nuire.
Pourtant je veux poursuivre, et malgré tous ces

Voir qui l'emportera de ce diable ou de nous.
Célie est quelque peu de notre intelligence,
Et ne voit son départ qu'avecque répugnance:
Je tâche à profiter de cette occasion.
Mais ils viennent: songeons à l'exécution.
Cette maison meublée est en ma bienséance,
Je puis en disposer avec grande licence:
Si le sort nous en dit, tout sera bien réglé;
Nul que moi ne s'y tient, et j'en garde la clé.
O Dieu! qu'en peu de temps on a vu d'aventures,
Et qu'un fourbe est contraint de prendre de figures

Scène II

Célie, Andrès

And. Vous le savez, Célie, il n'est rien que mon cœur N'ait fait pour vous prouver l'excès de son ardeur. Chez les Vénitiens, dès un assez jeune âge, La guerre en quelque estime avait mis mon courage, Et j'y pouvais un jour, sans trop croire de moi, Prétendre, en les servant, un honorable emploi, Lorsqu'on me vit pour vous oublier toute chose, Et que le prompt effet d'une métamorphose Qui suivit de mon cœur le soudain changement, Parmi vos compagnons sut ranger votre amant, Sans que mille accidents ni votre indifférence Aient pu me détacher de ma persévérance. Depuis, par un hasard d'avec vous séparé, Pour beaucoup plus de temps que je n'eusse auguré, Je n'ai pour vous rejoindre épargné temps ni peine.

Mas. Well, this last accident knocks me over. Any one would say-and certainly, so far as I am concerned. I am convinced of it—that the meddlesome demon of which he is possessed takes a delight in defying me, and leads him on purpose wherever his presence is most likely to be mischievous. Still, I shall persevere and, in spite of all these blows. we will see who wins the day, this demon or I. Célie is inclined to our side, and cannot think of going away save with repugnance: I must try to take advantage of that fact. But here they come: now I must think of putting my plans into execution. That furnished house is at my disposal, and I can do anything I like with it; if fate is on our side all will go well; no one lives there save myself, and I have the key. Goodness gracious! what a lot of things have happened to us in a short space of time, and what tight places a rogue finds himself in!

Scene II

Célie, Andrès

And. You know perfectly well, Célie, there is nothing I have not done to prove to you how deeply I love you. When I was very young, my courage during the war won me some respect from the Venetians; and, without wishing to have too high an opinion of myself, I may say that I might some day have risen to a post of honour, had I stayed in their service; but a sudden change came over me: when I saw you I abandoned everything else, and the change became pronounced when, as your lover, I became one of your gypsy companions. Neither a thousand incidents nor your indifference availed to deter me from persevering. Since then, separated from you by mischance for a longer time than I had foreseen, I spared neither time nor pains to

Enfin, ayant trouvé la vieille Égyptienne, Et plein d'impatience, apprenant votre sort, Que pour certain argent qui leur importait fort, Et qui de tous vos gens détourna le naufrage, Vous aviez en ces lieux été mise en otage, J'accours vite y briser ces chaînes d'intérêt, Et recevoir de vous les ordres qu'il vous plaît. Cependant on vous voit une morne tristesse, Alors que dans vos yeux doit briller l'allégresse. Si pour vous la retraite avait quelques appas, Venise du butin fait parmi les combats Me garde pour tous deux de quoi pouvoir y vivre. Que si comme devant il vous faut encor suivre, J'y consens, et mon cœur n'ambitionnera Que d'être auprès de vous tout ce qu'il vous plaira.

CEL. Votre zèle pour moi visiblement éclate;
Pour en paraître triste il faudrait être ingrate;
Et mon visage aussi par son émotion
N'explique point mon cœur en cette occasion:
Une douleur de tête y peint sa violence,
Et si j'avais sur vous quelque peu de puissance,
Notre voyage, au moins pour trois ou quatre jours,
Attendrait que ce mal eut pris un autre cours.

And. Autant que vous voudrez faites qu'il se diffère, Toutes mes volontés ne butent qu'à vous plaire. Cherchons une maison à vous mettre en repos: L'écriteau que voici s'offre tout à propos.

Scène III

Mascarille, Célie, Andrès

And. Seigneur suisse, êtes-vous de ce logis le maître?

Mas. Moi, pour serfir à fous.

And. Pourrons-nous y bien être?

Mas. Oui, moi pour d'estrancher chappon champre garni;

Mais ché non point locher te gent te méchant vi.

find you again. Finally, I found the old gypsy woman and, impatiently inquiring of her, I learnt your fate; that, the gypsies being badly in need of money, to save their very existence, you were pawned here. I hastened hither to break these golden chains, and to receive from you what orders it may please you to give. Yet I find you sad and melancholy instead of seeing joy beam from your eyes. If a quiet life appeals to you, I have ample means at Venice, out of booty taken in warfare, to provide enough for us both. And if, as before, I must still follow you, I will do so, for I have no other ambition than to be yours in any capacity you please.

CED. Your affection for me is patent to all; it would be ungrateful of me if it made me sad; my looks do not express my real feelings in the matter, because I have a violent headache; if I have the slightest influence over you, please delay our journey for at least three or four days, until I have taken a turn for the better.

And. As long as ever you like, my one desire is to please you. Let us look for a lodging where you may be comfortable. There is a notice-board in front of that house which might help us.

Scene III

Mascarille, Célie, Andrès

And. Monsieur Swiss, are you the master of this house?

Mas. I be, your humble serfant. And. Can we take lodgings here

Mas. Yes; I let furnished lodgings to schtrangers; but onnly to respectable peoples.

AND. Je crois votre maison franche de tout ombrage. Mas. Fous nouviau dant sti fil, moi foir à la fissage.

AND. Oui.

MAS.

La Matame-est-il mariage al Montsieur? AND. Quoi?

S'il être son fame, ou s'il être son sœur?

AND. Non.

Mas. Mon foi, pien choli. Finir pour marchandisse, Ou pien pour temanter à la Palais choustice? La procès il fault rien: il coûter tant tarchant! La procurair larron, la focat pien méchant.

AND. Ce n'est pas pour cela.

MAS. Fous tonc mener sti file

Pour fenir pourmener, et recarter la file? AND. Il n'importe. Je suis à vous dans un moment.

Je vais faire venir la vieille promptement, Contremander aussi notre voiture prête.

Mas. Li ne porte pas pien? AND.

Elle a mal à la tête.

Mas. Moi, chavoir de pon fin et de fromage pon. Entre fous, entre fous dans mon petit maisson.

Scène IV

LÉLIE, ANDRÈS

Lél. Quel que soit le transport d'une âme impatiente. Ma parole m'engage à rester en attente. A laisser faire un autre, et voir sans rien oser Comme de mes destins le Ciel veut disposer. Demandiez-vous quelqu'un dedans cette demeure? And. C'est un logis garni que j'ai pris tout à l'heure. Lér. A mon père pourtant la maison appartient. Et mon valet la nuit pour la garder s'v tient. And. Je ne sais; l'écriteau marque au moins qu'on

Lisez.

la loue:

AND. I hope your house has a good reputation.

Mas. I sees by your vace dat you are schtranger to dis place.

And. Yes.

Mas. Iss Matame the vife of Monsieur?

And. Sir?

Mas. Iss she your vife or your sister?

And. Neither.

Mas. My vurd, dat is all right. Air you come on business or hafe you a law-suit on 'and? A law-suit is a bad ting: it cost so mooch! Dese legal shentlemans are all tiefs und rogues.

AND. These matters do not trouble me.

Mas. You hafe brought dis yoong voman to valk about de town and hafe a look round?

And. What business is that of yours? I will be back in a moment. I must fetch the old woman at once and countermand the travelling carriage I had ordered.

Mas. Iss she not vell?

AND. She has a headache.

Mas. I hafe some goot vine und goot cheese, come into mine leedl 'ouse.

Scene IV

LÉLIE, ANDRÈS

Lél. However excited and impatient I may be, I have pledged my word to stand by and look on, seeing another work hard for me without daring to do anything, while Heaven decides my fate. Did you want to see any one who lives in that house?

Ann. I have just taken furnished lodgings there. Let. But that house belongs to my father, and my

valet sleeps there every night to take care of it.

And. I know nothing about that; the notice up shows that, at any rate, it is to let: read it.

ACTE V.

Lér. Certes, ceci me surprend, je l'avoue. Qui diantre l'aurait mis, et par quel intérêt . . . ? Ah, ma foi, je devine à peu près ce que c'est : Cela ne peut venir que de ce que j'augure.

And. Peut-on vous demander quelle est cette aventure?

Lél. Je voudrais à tout autre en faire un grand secret :

Mais pour vous il n'importe, et vous serez discret. Sans doute l'écriteau que vous voyez paraître, Comme je conjecture au moins, ne saurait être Que quelque invention du valet que je di, Que quelque nœud subtil qu'il doit avoir ourdi, Pour mettre en mon pouvoir certaine Égyptienne Dont j'ai l'âme piquée, et qu'il faut que j'obtienne; Je l'ai déjà manquée, et même plusieurs coups.

And. Vous l'appelez?

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LÉL. Célie.

And. Hé! que ne disiez-vous? Vous n'aviez qu'à parler, je vous aurais sans doute Épargné tous les soins que ce projet vous coûte.

Lér. Quoi? vous la connaissez?

And. C'est moi qui maintenant

Viens de la racheter.

Lél. Oh! discours surprenant!

And. Sa santé de partir ne nous pouvant permettre, Au logis que voilà je venais de la mettre, Et je suis très-ravi, dans cette occasion,

Et je suis tres-ravi, dans cette occasion, Que vous m'ayez instruit de votre intention.

Let. Quoi? j'obtiendrais de vous le bonheur que j'espère?

Vous pourriez . . . ?

And. Tout à l'heure on va vous satisfaire. Léz. Que pourrai-je vous dire, et quel remercîment...?

And. Non, ne m'en faites point, je n'en veux nullement. Lél. Well, I confess, this does surprise me. Who the deuce can have put that up, and what business . . .? Ah! I see, I have a shrewd guess who has done it: it could only have been one of his devices.

AND. May I ask what it means?

Lél. I intended to keep it a profound secret from everybody, but it will do no harm to tell it to you; you will be discreet. I have no doubt that the notice you see is just an invention of the valet I spoke of; it is part of some cunning plan he has devised to capture and put in my power a certain gypsy girl who has taken my fancy, and whom I must get hold of; I have already made several attempts to get possession of her, but all have failed so far.

AND. What is her name?

LÉL. Célie.

And. Ah! why did you not tell me this sooner? I could have spared you all the anxiety your plot must cost you.

Lél. What? do you know her? And. Yes: I have just bought her.

LÉL. Oh! what a surprise!

And. She is not well enough to travel just now, so I have just put her in these lodgings, and I am delighted you have told me your intentions.

Lél. What? are you going to give me the happiness that I hope for? Could you...?

And. You shall be satisfied immediately. Lét. What can I say to you, what thanks...?

AND. No, do not thank me. I do not wish it.

Scène V

MASCARILLE, LÉLIE, ANDRÈS

Mas. Hé bien! ne voilà pas mon enragé de maître! Il nous va faire encor quelque nouveau bissêtre. Lél. Sous ce grotesque habit qui l'aurait reconnu? Approche, Mascarille, et sois le bienvenu.

Mas. Moi souis ein chant honneur, moi non point Maquerille.

Chai point fentre chamais le fame ni le fille. Lén. Le plaisant baragouin! il est bon, sur ma foi.

Mas. Alle fous pourmener, sans toi rire te moi.

Lél. Va, va, lève le masque, et reconnais ton maître.

Mas. Partieu, tiaple, mon foi! jamais toi chai connaître.

Lél. Tout est accommodé, ne te déguise point.

Mas. Si toi point en aller, chai paille ein cou te point.

Lél. Ton jargon allemand est superflu, te dis-je; Car nous sommes d'accord, et sa bonté m'oblige: J'ai tout ce que mes vœux lui pouvaient demander, Et tu n'as pas sujet de rien appréhender.

Mas. Si vous êtes d'accord par un bonheur extrême, Je me dessuisse donc, et redeviens moi-même.

And. Ce valet vous servait avec beaucoup de feu. Mais je reviens à vous, demeurez quelque peu. Lél. Hé bien! que diras-tu.

Mas. Que j'ai l'âme ravie De voir d'un beau succès notre peine suivie. Lél. Tu feignais à sortir de ton déguisement,

Et ne pouvais me croire en cet événement?

Scene V

Mascarille, Lélie, Andrès

Mas. Hallo! if that isn't my fool of a master! Now we shall have a fresh mishap.

Lél. Who would have recognised him in that grotesque dress? Come here, Mascarille, you are very welcome.

Mas. I be a man of honour, I be not Maquerille.
I do not zell either voman or girl.

Lél. What droll gibberish! It really sounds very funny.

Mas. Go about your business, and do not laugh at me.

LEL. Come, come, take off your disguise, don't you recognise your master?

Mas. By got und de deuce, I nefar knew you.

Ler. All is settled, you need not disguise yourself any longer.

Mas. Iff you do not go avay, I vill gife you a goot clout on de face.

LEL. Your German gibberish is not needed, I tell you, for we have come to an agreement, and I am greatly in his debt. I have all I could wish for or ask from him; you need not be under any further apprehension.

Mas. If you have come to an agreement you are indeed in luck: I will deswiss myself and become Mascarille once more.

And. Your valet seems very zealous in your service. Stay here a little while, I shall be back soon.

LEL. Well! What do you say now?

Mas. I am delighted to see our labours brought to a successful issue.

Lél. You were hesitating whether to cast off your disguise or not. You could scarcely believe me, could you?

Mas. Comme je vous connais, j'étais dans l'épouvante, Et trouve l'aventure aussi fort surprenante. Lél. Mais confesse qu'enfin c'est avoir fait beaucoup; Au moins j'ai réparé mes fautes à ce coup, Et j'aurai cet honneur d'avoir fini l'ouvrage.

Mas. Soit, vous aurez été bien plus heureux que sage.

Scène VI

CÉLIE, MASCARILLE, LÉLIE, ANDRÈS

And. N'est-ce pas là l'objet dont vous m'avez parlé? Lél. Ah! quel bonheur au mien pourrait être égalé?

And. Il est vrai, d'un bienfait je vous suis redevable:
Si je ne l'avouais, je serais condamnable;
Mais enfin ce bienfait aurait trop de rigueur,
S'il fallait le payer aux dépens de mon cœur;
Jugez donc le transport où sa beauté me jette,
Si je dois à ce prix vous acquitter ma dette:
Vous êtes généreux, vous ne le voudriez pas.
Adieu pour quelques jours: retournons sur nos
pas.

Mas. Je ris, et toutefois je n'en ai guère envie. Vous voilà bien d'accord, il vous donne Célie.

Et... Vous m'entendez bien.

Lél. C'est trop: je ne veux plus
Te demander pour moi de secours superflus;
Je suis un chien, un traître, un bourreau détestable,
Indigne d'aucun soin, de rien faire incanable.

Indigne d'aucun soin, de rien faire incapable. Va, cesse tes efforts pour un malencontreux Qui ne saurait souffrir que l'on le rende heureux; Après tant de malheurs, après mon imprudence, Le trépas me doit seul prêter son assistance.

Mas. Voilà le vrai moyen d'achever son destîn; Il ne lui manque plus que de mourir enfin, Mas. My knowledge of you made me fear all might

not be well: it is indeed surprising.

Lée. Well, you must admit, at last, that I have done wonders; at least, I have made amends for my blunders this time. I have the honour of having brought the work to a successful issue.

Mas. Granted: you have been far more lucky than

wise.

Scene VI

CÉLIE, MASCARILLE, LÉLIE, ANDRÈS

AND. Is not this the lady of whom you spoke to me? Lér. Oh! what happiness can be compared with mine!

And. It is true that I am indebted to you for your kindness: I should be much to blame if I did not acknowledge it; but this kindness would be too dearly bought if I were to recompense it at the cost of sacrificing my love. Imagine the feelings roused in me by her beauty, and then you will admit that I could not pay my debt to you in such a manner. You are generous and you would not wish it. Farewell for a few days: we must go back.

Mas. I cannot help laughing, although I have little cause to do so. You have evidently come to an agreement; you are to have Célie... You under-

stand me?

LEL. This is too much! I will no longer ask you to help me; I am a puppy, a fool, a miserable idiot, unworthy of any pains being taken on my account, and incapable of doing anything. You must cease trying to serve an unlucky fellow, who spoils all attempts made to render him happy. After so many misfortunes, after such imprudence, death alone can be be of any use to me.

Mas. He has discovered the true way of accomplishing his destiny; indeed, nothing else is wanting to Pour le couronnement de toutes ses sottises. Mais en vain son dépit pour ses fautes commises Lui fait licencier mes soins et mon appui: Je veux, quoi qu'il en soit, le servir malgré lui, Et dessus son lutin obtenir la victoire: Plus l'obstacle est puissant, plus on reçoit de gloire, Et les difficultés dont on est combattu Sont les dames d'atour qui parent la vertu.

Scène VII

Mascarille, Célie

CÉL. Quoi que tu veuilles dire et que l'on se propose, De ce retardement j'attends fort peu de chose : Ce qu'on voit de succès peut bien persuader Qu'ils ne sont pas encor fort près de s'accorder; Et je t'ai déjà dit qu'un cœur comme le nôtre Ne voudrait pas pour l'un faire injustice à l'autre, Et que très-fortement, par de différents nœuds, Je me trouve attachée au parti de tous deux. Si Lélie a pour lui l'amour et sa puissance, Andrès pour son partage a la reconnaissance. Qui ne souffrira point que mes pensers secrets Consultent jamais rien contre ses intérêts: Oui, s'il ne peut avoir plus de place en mon âme, Si le don de mon cœur ne couronne sa flamme, Au moins dois-je ce prix à ce qu'il fait pour moi, De n'en choisir point d'autre au mépris de sa foi, Et de faire à mes vœux autant de violence Que j'en fais aux desirs qu'il met en évidence. Sur ces difficultés qu'oppose mon devoir, Juge ce que tu peux te permettre d'espoir. Mas. Ce sont, à dire vrai, de très-fâcheux obstacles. Et je ne sais point l'art de faire des miracles ; Mais je vais employer mes efforts plus puissants, Remuer terre et ciel, m'y prendre de tout sens Pour tâcher de trouver un biais salutaire. Et vous dirai bientôt ce qui se pourra faire.

crown all his follies but to die. It is in vain, however, for him to put an end to my labour and trouble on his account, simply because he is out of love with himself, by reason of the faults he has committed. I intend to serve him, no matter what may happen, whether he wishes it or no, and so rout his evil genius. The greater the obstacle the greater the glory: the lions in the path are really handmaidens in the train of virtue.

Scene VII

Mascarille, Célie

CÉL. Whatsoever you say to me or whatever they do to me, I expect very little from this delay: what we have seen so far is sufficient evidence that they have not yet come to anything like an agreement; I have told you already that a heart such as mine cannot bear to see injustice done to one for the sake of another, and that I am very strongly drawn to love both, though in different ways. For Lélie I feel the attractive power of love, for Andrès gratitude, which will not suffer me even in my secret thoughts to do anything contrary to his interests. Yes, although he has no longer a place in my heart, and the gift of love cannot reward his devotion, at least it is due to him, in return for what he has done to me, that I should not choose another in place of him, but do as much violence to my own heart as I do to his in respect of me. You must judge, then, what ground there is left for hope, bearing in mind the difficulties which lie across my path.

Mas. These difficulties are certainly very considerable, and I do not possess the art of working miracles, but I will do all I can; I will move heaven and earth, I will seek every means to find a happy issue out of all your afflictions and I will

let you know soon what can be done.

Scène VIII

CÉLIE, HIPPOLYTE

HIP. Depuis votre séjour, les dames de ces lieux Se plaignent justement des larcins de vos yeux, Si vous leur dérobez leurs conquêtes plus belles Et de tous leurs amants faites des infidèles. Il n'est guère de cœurs qui puissent échapper Aux traits dont à l'abord vous savez les frapper, Et mille libertés à vos chaînes offertes Semblent vous enrichir chaque jour de nos pertes. Quant à moi toutefois, je ne me plaindrais pas Du pouvoir absolu de vos rares appas, Si lorsque mes amants sont devenus les vôtres, Un seul m'eût consolé de la perte des autres; Mais qu'inhumainement vous me les ôtiez tous, C'est un dur procédé, dont je me plains à vous.

Cér. Voilà d'un air galant faire une raillerie; Mais épargnez un peu celle qui vous en prie. Vos yeux, vos propres yeux, se connaissent trop bien.

Pour pouvoir de ma part redouter jamais rien: Ils sont fort assurés du pouvoir de leurs charmes, Et ne prendront jamais de pareilles alarmes.

Hip. Pourtant en ce discours je n'ai rien avancé Qui dans tous les esprits ne soit déjà passé; Ét sans parler du reste, on sait bien que Célie A causé des desirs à Léandre et Lélie.

Cér. Je crois qu'étant tombés dans cet aveuglement, Vous vous consoleriez de leur perte aisément, Et trouveriez pour vous l'amant peu souhaitable Qui d'un si mauvais choix se trouverait capable.

Hip. Au contraire, j'agis d'un air tout différent, Et trouve en vos beautés un mérite si grand, J'y vois tant de raisons capables de défendre L'inconstance de ceux qui s'en laissent surprendre,

Scene VIII

CÉLIE, HIPPOLYTE

Hip. Ever since you came among us, all the ladies who live here have had good reasons to complain of the robberies you have committed; you have seduced away from them their finest conquests, and all their lovers have become faithless. There is scarce one who has escaped heartwhole, your charms having captured them from the very first. Thousands give themselves up to be bound by your chains and enrich you daily at our expense. However, as regards myself, I should not complain of the absolute monarchy of your rare charms, had they but left me one of my lovers to console me when the others jilted me to become yours; but you have mercilessly taken all away from me, and I cannot help complaining to you of my hard fate.

CÉL. You mock me exquisitely, but have a little mercy on me, I pray. Those eyes of yours are too well aware of their own powers ever to fear anything from me: your charms are too powerful ever

to cause you to think such things.

Hm. Yet I only tell you what every one else thinks; without mentioning any one else, it is common knowledge that you have won the affection of Léandre and Lélie.

Cér. I believe you will soon console yourself for loss of them since they have become so blindly in love; you can hardly sigh after a lover who has proved himself capable of making so ill a choice.

H.P. On the contrary, I think quite differently. You are very handsome, and there are many reasons to justify the inconstancy of those who have fallen victims to your charms. I cannot blame Léandre

Que je ne puis blâmer la nouveauté des feux Dont envers moi Léandre a parjuré ses vœux, Et le vais voir tantôt, sans haine et sans colère, Ramené sous mes lois par le pouvoir d'un père.

Scène IX

MASCARILLE, CÉLIE, HIPPOLYTE

Mas. Grande, grande nouvelle, et succès surprenant, Que ma bouche vous vient annoncer maintenant! Cél. Qu'est-ce donc?

Mas. Écoutez, voici, sans flatterie...

Cr. Quoi?

Mas. La fin d'une vraie et pure comédie. La vieille Égyptienne à l'heure même...

CÉL. Hé bien?

Mas. Passait dedans la place, et ne songeait à rien, Alors qu'une autre vieille assez défigurée, L'ayant de près, au nez, longtemps considérée, Par un bruit enroué de mots injurieux A donné le signal d'un combat furieux, Qui pour armes pourtant, mousquets, dagues ou fièches.

Ne faisait voir en l'air que quatre griffes sèches, Dont ces deux combattants s'efforcaient d'arracher Ce peu que sur leurs os les ans laissent de chair. On n'entend que ces mots : chienne, louve, bagace. D'abord leurs scoffions ont volé par la place, Et laissant voir à nu deux têtes sans cheveux. Ont rendu le combat risiblement affreux. Andrès et Trufaldin, à l'éclat du murmure, Ainsi que force monde, accourus d'aventure, Ont à les décharpir eu de la peine assez, Tant leurs esprits étaient par la fureur poussés. Cependant que chacune, après cette tempête, Songe à cacher aux yeux la honte de sa tête, Et que l'on veut savoir qui causait cette humeur, Celle qui la première avait fait la rumeur, Malgré la passion dont elle était émue,

for having taken up with a new love, and broken his plighted troth to me. But I shall soon see him brought to my feet by his father's authority, without any feeling of hatred or anger.

Scene IX

MASCARILLE, CÉLIE, HIPPOLYTE

Mas. Great news! great news! A wonderful thing has happened. Just listen.

CÉL. What is it? tell me.
MAS. Listen; it is for all the world like...

CÉL. What?

Mas. The conclusion of a real and genuine comedy.

Just now that old gypsy-woman...

CÉL. Well?

Mas. Was crossing the market-place thinking about nothing in particular, when another old woman, by no means a beauty, came and stared in her face for a long time and then broke out into a hoarse torrent of abusive language, which was the signal for a regular set-to; only, instead of muskets, daggers, or arrows for weapons, you could only see struggling in the air four shrivelled paws, with which these two combatants tried to tear off what little of flesh the years had left on their old bones. O You could hear nothing but 'bitch,' 'drab,' 'tru l.' Their caps went flying about the place at the first encounter, exposing their bald heads and making the fight horribly grotesque. When Andrès and Trufaldin heard all the row, they ran to the field of battle with a crowd of people, and it was a long time before they could pull the two apart, so furious were they with passion. When the tempest was over, each old lady tried to hide her bald head for shame; and, while people were wondering what all the row was about, the dame who first began the quarrel, notwithstanding the passion which still excited her, gazed upon Trufaldin for a long time

Avant sur Trufaldin tenu longtemps la vue: 'C'est vous, si quelque erreur n'abuse ici mes yeux, Qu'on m'a dit qui viviez inconnu dans ces lieux,' A-t-elle dit tout haut; 'Oh! rencontre opportune! Oui, Seigneur Zanobio Ruberti, la fortune Me fait vous reconnaître, et dans le même instant Que pour votre intérêt je me tourmentais tant. Lorsque Naples vous vit quitter votre famille, J'avais, vous le savez, en mes mains votre fille, Dont j'élevais l'enfance, et qui par mille traits Faisait voir dès quatre ans sa grâce et ses attraits. Celle que vous voyez, cette infâme sorcière, Dedans notre maison se rendant familière, Me vola ce trésor. Hélas! de ce malheur Votre femme, je crois, conçut tant de douleur, Que cela servit fort pour avancer sa vie : Si bien qu'entre mes maius cette fille ravie Me faisant redouter un reproche facheux, Je vous fis annoncer la mort de toutes deux: Mais il faut maintenant, puisque je l'ai connue, Qu'elle fasse savoir ce qu'elle est devenue.' Au nom de Zanobio Ruberti, que sa voix Pendant tout ce récit répétait plusieurs fois, Andrès, ayant changé quelque temps de visage, A Trufaldin surpris a tenu ce langage: 'Quoi donc? le Ciel me fait trouver heureusement Celui que jusqu'ici j'ai cherché vainement. Et que j'avais pu voir sans pourtant reconnaître La source de mon sang et l'auteur de mon être ! Oui, mon père, je suis Horace, votre fils : D'Albert, qui me gardait, les jours étant finis, Me sentant naître au cœur d'autres inquiétudes, Je sortis de Bologne, et quittant mes études, Portai durant six ans mes pas en divers lieux, Selon que me poussait un desir curieux. Pourtant, après ce temps, une secrète envie Me pressa de revoir les miens et ma patrie. Mais dans Naples, hélas! je ne vous trouvai plus, Et n'v sus votre sort que par des bruits confus: Si bien qu'à votre quête ayant perdu mes peines,

and then, in a loud voice, she exclaimed: 'You are the person, unless my eyes do not play me false, who, I was told, was living under an assumed name here. Oh! how glad I am to see you. Yes, Signor Zanobio Ruberti, fate has brought you to me at the very moment when I was working so hard on your behalf. When you left your family at Naples. your daughter, you know, was left in my hands. I had brought her up from infancy; and, when she was but four years old, she showed in a thousand ways how beautiful and attractive she would The woman you see there, that infamous witch, wormed herself into our household and stole away my treasure from me. Alas! your wife's grief at this misfortune was so great that I firmly believe it shortened her life. I was so afraid of your bitter reproaches when you should hear that your daughter had been seduced away from my care, that I sent you word both were dead; but now that I have found this woman she must tell us what has become of the girl.' At the name of Zanobio Ruberti, which she often repeated during this recital, Andrès, who had changed colour several times, said to Trufaldin, who did not know what to make of all this, 'So, Heaven has happily revealed to me one whom I have hitherto sought in vain. I have seen the source of my life and the author of my being without recognising him! Yes. father, I am your son Horace. When my tutor Albert died, I began to feel uneasy in my mind: I left Bologna and, throwing up my studies, I wandered about in divers places for six years just as my fancy led me. Then, after that, I was possessed by a secret desire to see my relations and my native country once again. But, alas! when I reached Naples, I could not find you; I could only glean confused reports about your fate; so, having tried vainly to find you, I stayed for a while in Venice, and my fruitless wanderings came to an end. I have lived ever since without knowing any-

Venise pour un temps borna mes courses vaines; Et j'ai vécu depuis sans que de ma maison J'eusse d'autres clartés que d'en savoir le nom.' Je vous laisse à juger si pendant ces affaires Trufaldin ressentait des transports ordinaires. Enfin (pour retrancher ce que plus à loisir Vous aurez le moven de vous faire éclaircir Par la confession de votre Égyptienne), Trufaldin maintenant vous reconnaît pour sienne; Andrès est votre frère; et comme de sa sœur Il ne peut plus songer à se voir possesseur, Une obligation qu'il prétend reconnaître A fait qu'il vous obtient pour épouse à mon maître, Dont le père, témoin de tout l'événement, Donne à cette hyménée un plein consentement; Et pour mettre une joie entière en sa famille, Pour le nouvel Horace a proposé sa fille. Voyez que d'incidents à la fois enfantés.

Cér. Je demeure immobile à tant de nouveautés. Mas. Tous viennent sur mes pas, hors les deux championnes,

Qui du combat encor remettent leurs personnes; Léandre est de la troupe, et votre père aussi : Moi, je vais avertir mon maître de ceci, Et que lorsqu'à ses vœux on croit le plus d'obstacle, Le Ĉiel en sa faveur produit comme un miracle. Hip. Un tel ravissement rend mes esprits confus, Que pour mon propre sort je n'en aurais pas plus. Mais les voici venir.

Scène X

TRUFALDIN, ANSELME, PANDOLFE, ANDRÈS, CÉLIE, HIPPOLYTE, LÉANDRE.

Ah! ma fille. TRU. Cét.

Ah! mon père. Tru. Sais-tu déjà comment le Ciel nous est prospère? thing of my family other than its name.' You will readily believe that Trufaldin was more than ordinarily moved at these words. Finally (to cut short a story which you will soon hear in full from your gypsy-woman) Trufaldin now recognises you sa his daughter; Andrès is your brother; and, since you are his sister, he can no longer think of marrying you. Furthermore, an obligation which he makes out he is under has caused him to obtain my master as a husband for you. The father, who saw everything that happened, gives his full consent to this union; and, to complete the happiness of his family, proposes that the newly turned-up Horace shall wed his daughter. There's a fine lot of things to come to a head all at the same time.

CÉL. It takes my breath away.

Mas. They are all following me here except the two female gladiators, who are still busy putting their toilet to rights after the combat; Léandre and your father are also with them. I am going to tell my master of this: just when the obstacles to his suit seemed most formidable, Heaven has performed a miracle on his behalf.

Hip. I feel as delighted and excited at this news as though it had happened to myself. But here they come.

Scene X

Trufaldin, Anselme, Pandolfe, Andrès, Célie, Hippolyte, Léandre

Tru. Ah! my daughter! Cél. Ah! my father!

TRU. Have you heard how Heaven has blessed us?

CÉL. Je viens d'entendre ici ce succès merveilleux. Hrp. (à Léandre). En vain vous parleriez pour excuser vos feux,

Si j'ai devant les yeux ce que vous pouvez dire. Léa. Un généreux pardon est ce que je desire; Mais j'atteste les Cieux qu'en ce retour soudain Mon père fait bien moins que mon propre dessein.

Ann. (à Célie). Qui l'aurait jamais cru, que cette ardeur si pure

Pùt être condamnée un jour par la nature? Toutefois tant d'honneur la sut toujours régir, Qu'en y changeant fort peu je puis la retenir.

Cel. Pour moi, je me blâmais, et croyais faire faute, Quand je n'avais pour vous qu'une estime très-

Je ne pouvais savoir quel obstacle puissant M'arrétait sur un pas si doux et si glissant, Et détournait mon cœur de l'aveu d'une flamme Que mes sens s'efforçaient d'introduire en mon âme.

Tru. Mais en te recouvrant que diras-tu de moi, Si je songe aussitôt à me priver de toi, Et t'engage à son fils sous les lois d'hyménée?

CÉL. Que de vous maintenant dépend ma destinée.

Scène XI

Trufaldin, Mascarille, Lélie, Anselme, Pandolfe, Célie, Andrès, Hippolyte, Léandre

Mas. Voyons si votre diable aura bien le pouvoir De détruire à ce coup un si solide espoir, Et si contre l'excès du bien qui vous arrive Vous armerez encor votre imaginative. Par un coup imprévu des destins les plus doux, Vos vœux sont couronnés, et Célie est à vous. CEL. I have just heard this marvellous news.

Hip. (to Léandre). You need not make excuses for your infatuation: I see before me all you could urge.

Lea. I only ask you to be generous and pardon me; I take Heaven to witness, however, that this sudden return on my part is prompted far more by my own

inclination than by my father's wishes.

Ann. (to Célie). Who would have thought that so pure an affection would one day be condemned by nature? Nevertheless, since it was always regulated by the codes of honour, I may still continue to love, with

but slightly altered feelings.

Cin. And I blamed myself, thinking it wrong of me that I could not feel for you aught but very high esteem. I could not imagine what it was that placed such a powerful obstacle in my way and stopped me from entering upon a path so pleasant and seductive. My heart turned away from acknowledging a love which my senses tried to communicate to my soul.

Tru. But what will you say to me if, as soon as I have found you again, I should immediately think of parting with you and pledging your hand in

marriage to his son?

CÉL. That my future now lies in your hands.

Scene XI

Trufaldin, Mascarille, Lélie, Anselme, Pandolfe, Célie, Andrès, Hippolyte, Léandre

Mas. Let us see whether that evil genius of yours will have sufficient power to destroy hopes based so soundly as these, and whether such an accession of good fortune as has befallen you will not fire your imagination once more to struggle against it. Your desires are crowned by a happy and unlooked-for stroke of destiny and Célie is yours.

Lél. Croirai-je que du Ciel la puissance absolue . . . ?

TRU. Oui, mon gendre, il est vrai.

Pan. La chose est résolue.

Ann. Je m'acquitte par là de ce que je vous dois.

LÉL. (à Mascarille). Il faut que je t'embrasse, et mille et mille fois,

Dans cette joie . . .

Mas. Ahi, ahi! doucement je vous prie:
Il m'a presque étouffé. Je crains fort pour Célie,
Si vous la caressez avec tant de transport;
De vos embrassements on se passerait fort.

Tru. (à Lélie). Vous savez le bonheur que le Ciel me renvoie;

Mais puisqu'un même jour nous met tous dans la joie,

Ne nous séparons point qu'il ne soit terminé,

Et que son père aussi nous soit vite amené.

Mas. Vous voilà tous pourvus: n'est-il point quelque fille

Qui put accommoder le pauvre Mascarille? À voir chacun se joindre à sa chacune ici,

J'ai des démangeaisons de mariage aussi.

Ans. J'ai ton fait.

Mas. Allons donc, et que les Cieux prospères Nous donnent des enfants dont nous soyons les pères. LEL. Am I to believe that Heaven, in its supreme power . . .?

TRU. Yes, son-in-law, it is a fact.

PAN. All is settled.

AND. I thus repay the debt I owe you.

Léz. (to Mascarille). I must embrace you a thousand and a thousand times for very joy . . .

Mas. Goodness me! gently, I implore you: he has nearly suffocated me. I shall tremble, I shall be considerably alarmed for Célie's safety if you hug her like that. One can do very well without such embraces as that.

Tru. (to Lélie). You know the happiness which Heaven has sent me; but, since we have all been made to rejoice on one and the same day, let us not part until nightfall, and let his father be sent for at once to join us.

Mas. Now, you are all provided for. Is there never a girl who might comfort poor Mascarille? To see every lad have his lass makes a fellow long to be married too.

Ans. I know one who will do for you.

Mas. Come on, then, and may Heaven bless us with children whose begetting shall be due to us.

LOVERS' QUARRELS

(Dépit Amoureux)

Dépit Amoureux first saw the light at Béziers, in 1656, and it had a successful début in Paris three years later. Molière played the part of Albert.

years later. Molière played the part of Albert.

The first edition is that of 1663, with the following title-page: Dépit | AMOUREUX | COMEDIE, |
REPRESENTÉE SUR LE | Theatre du Palais Royal. | De I. B.
P. MOLIERE. | A PARIS, | Chez GABRIEL QUINET,

au Palais, dans la | Galerie des Prisonniers, à l'Ange Gabriel. | M.DC.LXIII. | AVEC PRIVILEGE DU ROY.

LOVERS' QUARRELS

(Dépit Amoureux)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ÉRASTE, Lucile's lover.

Albert, Lucile's father.
GROS-RENÉ, Éraste's valet.
Valère, Polydore's son.
Lucile, Albert's daughter.
Marinette, Lucile's maid.
Polydore, Valère's father.
FROSINE, Ascagne's confidant.
Ascagne, a girl in male clothing.
Mascarille, Valère's valet.
Métaphraste, a pedant.
La Rapière, a hooligan (bretteur).

DEPIT AMOUREUX

ACTE I

Scène I

ÉRASTE, GROS-RENÉ

Er. Veux-tu que je te die? une atteinte secrette Ne laisse point mon âme en une bonne assiette: Oui, quoi qu'à mon amour tu puisses repartir, Il craint d'être la dupe, à ne te point mentir; Qu'en faveur d'un rival ta foi ne se corrompe, Ou du moins qu'avec moi toi-même on ne te trompe.

GR.-R. Pour moi, me soupconner de quelque mauvais

Je dirai, n'en déplaise à Monsieur votre amour. Que c'est injustement blesser ma prud'homie Et se connaître mal en physionomie. Les gens de mon minois ne sont point accusés D'être, grâces à Dieu, ni fourbes, ni rusés.

Cet honneur qu'on nous fait, je ne le démens guères,

Et suis homme fort rond de toutes les manières. Pour que l'on me trompât, cela se pourrait bien : Le doute est mieux fondé; pourtant je n'en crois rien.

Je ne vois point encore, ou je suis une bête.

LOVERS' QUARRELS

ACTI

SCENE I

ÉRASTE, GROS-RENÉ

ÉR. Shall I tell you what troubles me? I have a gnawing anxiety that never leaves my mind at rest. Yes, no matter what you say about the girl I love, to tell you the truth I am afraid of being deceived; you may be bribed from your allegiance in order to favour a rival; or you may even be taken in as well as myself.

GR.-R. If you suspect me of any disloyal trick, I must say, without wishing to seem disrespectful to you, that you wound me most unjustly and are very ignorant in the science of physiognomy. People of my build are, thank heaven, never accused of being either rogues or cheats. I do not give the lie to the compliment paid to people of my stature: there is nothing mean or little about me in any respect. As to the possibility of my being deceived, that may indeed be: there is more foundation for that suspicion, but, nevertheless, I don't believe it. I may be an ass, but I cannot see why you worry yourself as you do. It seems to me that Lucile is pretty well in love with you; she sees you.

Sur quoi vous avez pu prendre martel en tête. Lucile, à mon avis, vous montre assez d'amour: Elle vous voit, vous parle à toute heure du jour; Et Valère, après tout, qui cause votre crainte, Semble n'être à présent souffert que par contrainte Ér. Souvent d'un faux espoir un amant est nourri:

Le mieux reçu toujours n'est pas le plus chéri; Et tout ce que d'ardeur font paraître les femmes Parfois n'est qu'un beau voile à couvrir d'autres flammes.

Valère enfin, pour être un amant rebuté, Montre depuis un temps trop de tranquillité; Et ce qu'à ces faveurs, dont tu crois l'apparence, Il témoigne de joie ou bien d'indifférence M'empoisonne à tous coups leurs plus charmants appas,

Me donne ce chagrin que tu ne comprends pas, Tient mon bonheur en doute, et me rend difficile Une entière croyance aux propos de Lucile. Je voudrais, pour trouver un tel destin plus doux, Y voir entrer un peu de son transport jaloux; Et sur ses déplaisirs et son impatience Mon âme prendrait lors une pleine assurance. Toi-même penses-tu qu'on puisse, comme il fait, Voir chérir un rival d'un esprit satisfait? Et si tu n'en crois rien, dis-moi, je t'en conjure, Si j'ai lieu de rêver dessus cette aventure. Gr.-R. Peut-être que son cœur a changé de desirs,

Connaissant qu'il poussait d'inutiles soupirs.

Én. Lorsque par les rebuts une âme est détachée,
Elle veut fuir l'objet dont elle fut touchée,
Et ne rompt point sa chaîne avec si peu d'éclat,
Qu'elle puisse rester en un paisible état.
De ce qu'on a chéri la fatale présence
Ne nous laisse jamais dedans l'indifférence;
Et si de cette vue on n'accroît son dédain,
Notre amour est bien près de nous rentrer au sein;
Enfin, crois-moi, si bien qu'on éteigne une flamme,
Un peu de jalousie occupe encore une âme,
Et l'on ne saurait voir, sans en être piqué,

and talks with you at all hours of the day; and Valère, of whom you are afraid, seems to me to be only allowed to see her because she cannot help herself.

ÉR. A lover often indulges in false hopes, and the man who is best received is not always the best loved. When women openly let it be seen that they are in love, it is often only a thin veil to disguise other passions. Valère, for instance, shows far too much equanimity to be a rejected suitor; and the pleasure or even indifference he shows at those favours which you imagine are meant for me embitters their charms for me at every turn, fills me with this grief which you do not understand, holds my happiness in a state of suspense and renders it difficult for me to place entire faith in Lucile's professions. I should need to see Valère stirred a little by jealousy before I could really enjoy my happiness; my heart would be reassured if I saw him annoyed and impatient. Do you really think it possible for any one to see a rival made love to and be as complaisant as he is? If you do not, then you must acknowledge that I have good cause to be wretched at what is happening.

GR.-R. Perhaps his affection cooled when he found that he sighed in vain.

Ém. When a heart has been chilled by rebuffs, it desires to flee from the object of its attachment, and it does not break the chains that bind it so easily as to be able to become indifferent all at once. When we have loved, we can never afterwards be really callous to the fateful influence of the person cherished; if our displeasure does not increase upon again beholding her, love trembles on the brink of reawakening within us. Believe me, however carefully we may extinguish our passion, some spark of jealousy still remains in our

Posséder par un autre un cœur qu'ou a manqué.

Gn.-R. Pour moi, je ne sais point tant de philosophie:
Ce que voient mes yeux, franchement je m'y fie,
Et ne suis point de moi si mortel ennemi,
Que je m'aille affliger sans sujet ni demi.
Pourquoi subtiliser et faire le capable
A chercher des raisons pour être misérable?
Sur des soupçons en l'air je m'irais alarmer!
Laissons venir la fête avant que la chômer.
Le chagrin me paraît une incommode chose;
Je n'en prends point pour moi sans bonne et juste cause.

Et mêmes à mes yeux cent sujets d'en avoir S'offrent le plus souvent, que je ne veux pas voir. Avec vous en amour je cours même fortune; Celle que vous aurez me doit être commune: La maîtresse ne peut abuser votre foi, A moins que la suivante en fasse autant pour moi ; Mais j'en fuis la pensée avec un soin extrême. Je veux croire les gens quand on me dit 'Je t'aime.' Et ne vais point chercher, pour m'estimer heureux, Si Mascarille ou non s'arrache les cheveux. Que tantôt Marinette endure qu'à son aise Jodelet par plaisir la caresse et la baise. Et que ce beau rival en rie ainsi qu'un fou. A son exemple aussi j'en rirai tout mon soûl, Et l'on verra qui rit avec meilleure grâce. Ér. Voilà de tes discours. GR.-R. Mais je la vois qui passe.

Scène II

Marinette, Éraste, Gros-René

Gr.-R. St, Marinette!

MAR. Oh! oh! que fais-tu là?

Gr.-R. Ma foi,

Demande, nous étions tout à l'heure sur toi.

hearts; we cannot, without irritation, see the being we have lost in the possession of another.

GR.-R. I am afraid I am not great at philosophy: I simply believe the evidence of my own eyes, and am not such an inveterate enemy to myself as to torment myself without good cause. Why should I cudgel my brains and labour hard to find reasons for being miserable or alarm myself about imaginary suspicions? Why cross bridges before you come to them? Grief seems to me to be an undesirable companion; I never take up with it unless I have good and just cause. There are plenty of opporfunities to be sad, but I don't notice them. I run the same risks in love that you do, and what happens to one is just as likely to happen to the The maid may be just as faithless to me as the mistress to you; but I take care not to think of such things. I prefer to believe people when they say to me, 'I love you'; and in order to gauge my happiness I do not try to find out if Mascarille is tearing out his hair or not. So long as Marinette lets herself be fondled and kissed by me to my heart's content, my handsome rival may laugh himself silly. I can laugh at it too with all my heart, and we shall see who laughs the heartiest.

Én. That is just like you. Gn.-R. Here she comes.

Scene II

MARINETTE, ÉRASTE, GROS-RENÉ

Gr.-R. I say! Marinette!
MAR. Dear me! what are you doing here?
Gr.-R. Well, that is a question; we were just talking about you.

Mar. Vous êtes aussi là, Monsieur! Depuis une heure Vous m'avez fait trotter comme un Basque, je meure!

Ér. Comment?

MAR. Pour vous chercher j'ai fait dix mille pas, Et vous promets, ma foi . . .

ÉR. Quoi?

Mar. Que vous n'êtes pas Au temple, au cours, chez vous, ni dans la grande place.

GR.-R. Il fallait en jurer.

Ér. Apprends-moi donc, de grâce, Qui te fait me chercher?

Mar. Quelqu'un, en vérité, Qui pour vous n'a pas trop mauvaise volonté,

Ma maîtresse, en un mot.

ÉR. Ah! chère Marinette,
Ton discours de son cœur est-il bien l'interprète?
Ne me déguise point un mystère fatal;
Je ne t'en voudrai pas pour cela plus de mal:
Au nom des Dieux, dis-moi si ta belle maîtresse
N'abuse point mes vœux d'une fausse tendresse.
Mar. Hé! Hé! d'où vous vient donc ce plaisant

mouvement?

Elle ne fait pas voir assez son sentiment!

Quel garant est-ce encore que votre amour
demande?

Que lui faut-il?

Gr.-R. A moins que Valère se pende, Bagatelle! son cœur ne s' assurera point.

Mar. Comment?

Gr.-R. Il est jaloux jusques en un tel point. Mar. De Valère? Ah! vraiment la pensée est bien belle!

Elle peut seulement naître en votre cervelle. Je vous croyais du sens, et jusqu'à ce moment J'avais de votre esprit quelque bon sentiment; Mais, à ce que je vois, je m'étais fort trompée. Ta tête de ce mal est-elle aussi frappée? MAR. Oh, you are there too, Monsieur! You've kept me on the trot like a lamplighter for the last hour. I am nearly dead!

ÉR. What for?

Mar. I've walked my feet off to find you, and I give you my word . . .

Ér. Well?

MAR. That you weren't at church, on the promenade, at home, or in the great square.

GR.-R. You may take your oath on that. ÉR. Who ever sent you hunting for me?

Mar. Some one, to be sure, who does not think badly of you—my mistress, I mean.

Ér. Ah! dear Marinette, does she really think kindly of me? Do not hide unpleasant news from me; I should bear you no ill-will for telling it me. For Heaven's sake tell me, doesn't your lovely mistress merely pretend to love me?

Mar. Ha! Ha! Where did you get that strange idea? Has she not let you see pretty plainly which way the wind blows? What further pledges do you want? What else can be done?

Gr.-R. Unless you can tell him some such trifle as that Valère has hung himself, his mind will not be at rest.

MAR. Why?

GR.-R. He is so dreadfully jealous.

MAR. Of Valère? Oh! really, what an awfully silly idea. Such a fancy could only have occurred to you. I thought you were a man of sense, and, until now, I had a high opinion of your brains; but it seems to me I have been greatly mistaken. Are you also tarred with the same brush?

Gr.-R. Moi, jaloux? Dieu m'en garde, et d'être assez badin

Pour m'aller emmaigrir avec un tel chagrin! Outre que de ton cœur ta foi me cautionne, L'opinion que j'ai de moi-même est trop bonne Pour croire auprès de moi que quelqu'autre te plût. Où diantre pourrais-tu trouver qui me valût?

MAR. En effet, tu dis bien, voilà comme il faut être:

Jamais de ces soupçons qu'un jaloux fait paraître! Tout le fruit qu'on en cueille est de se mettre mal,

Et d'avancer par là les desseins d'un rival:
Au mérite souvent de qui l'éclat vous blesse
Vos chagrins font ouvrir les yeux d'une maîtresse;
Et j'en sais tel qui doit son destin le plus doux
Aux soins trop inquiets de son rival jaloux;
Enfin, quoi qu'il en soit, témoigner de l'ombrage,
C'est jouer en amour un mauvais personnage,
Et se rendre, après tout, misérable à crédit:
Cela, seigneur Éraste, en passant vous soit dit.
Ér. Eh bien! n'en parlons plus. Que venais-tu

m'apprendre?

Man. Vous mériteriez bien que l'on vous fit attendre,
Qu'afin de vous punir je vous tinsse caché.
Le grand secret pourquoi je vous ai tant cherché.
Tenez, voyez ce mot, et sortez hors de doute:
Lisez-le donc tout haut, personne ici n'écoute.

Én. (lit). 'Vous m'avez dit que votre amour Était capable de tout faire: Il se couronnera lui-même dans ce jour, S'il peut avoir l'aveu d'un père. Faites parler les droits qu'on a dessus mon cœur; Je vous en donne la licence; Et si c'est en votre faveur, Je vous réponds de mon obéissance.'

Ah! quel bonheur! O toi, qui me l'as apporté, Je te dois regarder comme une déité. GR.-R. I, jealous? Heaven forbid I should ever be so silly as to lose flesh by fretting over such a thing as that! To say nothing of being sure of your fidelity, I have too good an opinion of myself to believe that any one else could please you better than I do. Where the deuce could you find any one equal to me?

MAR. Good, I like to hear you talk like that. A jealous man should never let his suspicions be seen! He only does himself harm thereby and so advances the cause of his rival. Whining about another whose goings on have aroused your jealousy often ends in opening the eyes of your mistress to his charms. I know a man who owes his present happiness entirely to the too obvious anxiety of his jealous rival. In fact, no matter what may happen, to take offence in love is to act a foolish part, and only ends in making a man miserable to no purpose. This, Monsieur Eraste, is meant as a hint for you.

ÉR. All right, let us say no more about it. What have you to come to tell me?

MAR. You really deserve to be kept waiting. I have a good mind to punish you by keeping my great secret from you, though I have hunted for you high and low. Here, look at this letter and then doubt no more. Read it aloud, no one is here to listen.

Er. (reads). 'You say your love is capable of doing anything. It may be crowned this very day if you can obtain my father's consent. Tell him how much you love me-I give you leave to do so, and, if his verdict is in your favour, I promise to be yours.' Oh! what rapture! You are an angel from Heaven, to have brought me this.

Gr.-R. Je vous le disais bien : contre votre croyance, Je ne me trompe guère aux choses que je pense. Ér. (lit). 'Faites parler les droits qu'on a dessus mon cœur :

Je vous en donne la licence; Et si c'est en votre faveur,

Je vous réponds de mon obéissance. Mar. Si je lui rapportais vos faiblesses d'esprit, Elle désavouerait bientôt un tel écrit.

Én. Ah! cache-lui, de grâce, une peur passagère,
Où mon âme a cru voir quelque peu de lumière;
Ou si tu la lui dis, ajoute que ma mort
Est prête d'expier l'erreur de ce transport,
Que je vais à ses pieds, si j'ai pu lui déplaire,
Sacrifier ma vie à sa juste colère.

MAR. Ne parlons point de mort, ce n'en est pas le temps.

Én. Au reste, je te dois beaucoup, et je prétends Reconnaître dans peu, de la bonne manière, Les soins d'une si noble et si belle courrière.

Mar. A propos, savez-vous où je vous ai cherché Tantôt encore?

Ér. ' Hé bien?

Mar. Tout proche du marché,

Où vous savez.

Ér. Où donc?

Mar. Là, dans cette boutique Où, dès le mois passé, votre cœur magnifique Me promit, de sa grâce, une bague.

ÉR. Ah! j'entends.

GR.-R. La matoise!

En. Il est vrai, j'ai tardé trop longtemps A m'acquitter vers toi d'une telle promesse, Mais . . .

MAR. Ce que j'en ai dit, n'est pas que je vous presse. GR.-R. Oh! que non!

Ér. Celle-ci peut-être aura de quoi Te plaire: accepte-la pour celle que je doi. GR.-R. I told you so: though you will not believe

me, I am rarely mistaken.

Én. (reads). 'Tell him how much you love me. I give you leave to do so, and, if his verdict is in your favour, I promise to be yours.'

Mar. If I were to tell her how feeble-hearted you are, she would very soon take back her word.

ÉR. Áh! I implore you to keep from her what was merely a passing fear, for which I believed I had some slight cause; or, if you tell her of it, add that I am ready to forfeit my life to atone for my criminal fault, that I will lay down my life at her feet, if I have displeased her, as a sacrifice to her just indignation.

MAR. This is no time to talk of dying.

Én. Nevertheless, I am much indebted to you, and, before long, I will handsomely repay the trouble incurred by so pretty and gentle a messenger as you.

Man. That reminds me. Where do you think I hunted for you just now?

Er. Well, where?

Mar. Close to the market-place. You know where.

ÉR. Whereabouts?

MAR. Why, near that shop where you were kind enough to promise me a ring, a month ago.

ÉR. Oh! I know.

GR.-R. The artful little jade!

Én. You are quite right, I have delayed far too long in fulfilling my promise to you, but . . .

Mar. I did not remind you in order to ask you.

GR.-R. Oh! of course not!

En. Perhaps this one may take your fancy: accept it in place of the one I owe you.

MAR. Monsieur, vous vous moquez; j'aurais honte à la prendre.

Gr.-R. Pauvre honteuse, prends, sans davantage attendre:

Refuser ce qu'on donne est bon à faire aux fous. Mar. Ce sera pour garder quelque chose de vous.

ÉR. Quand puis-je rendre grâce à cet ange adorable?

MAR. Travaillez à vous rendre un père favorable. Ér. Mais s'il me rebutait, dois-je . . .

MAR. Alors comme alors!
Pour vous on emploiera toutes sortes d'efforts;
D'une facon ou d'autre, il faut qu'elle soit vôtre:

Faites votre pouvoir, et nous ferons le nôtre. Én. Adieu, nous en saurons le succès dans ce jour.

MAR. Et nous, que dirons-nous aussi de notre amour?
Tu ne m'en parles point.

Gr.-R. Un hymen qu'on souhaite, Entre gens comme nous, est chose bientôt faite: Je te veux; me veux-tu de même?

Mar. Avec plaisir.

GR.-R. Touche, il suffit.

MAR. Adieu, Gros-René, mon desir. Gr.-R. Adieu, mon astre.

MAR. Adieu, beau tison de ma flamme. GR.-R. Adieu, chère comète, arc-en-ciel de mon âme. Le bon Dieu soit loué! nos affaires vont bien:

Albert n'est pas un homme à vous refuser rien. Ér. Valère vient à nous.

Gr.-R. Je plains le pauvre hère, Sachant ce qui se passe.

Scène III

ÉRASTE, VALÈRE, GROS-RENÉ

Ér. Hé bien, seigneur Valère? Val. Hé bien, seigneur Éraste? Mar. Monsieur, you are making game of me: I should be ashamed to take it.

GR.-R. Poor modest wench, take it, without making more fuss about it: to refuse anything given you is the act of a fool.

Mar. I take it so that I may have something to make me always remember you.

Én. When can I return thanks to that adorable angel?

MAR. You must labour hard to win over her father.

Ér. But if he rejects me, ought I . . .

Mar. We will cross that bridge when we come to it!

I will do everything I can for you; by fair means
or foul she shall be yours. Do your best and we
will do ours.

Ér. Farewell! we shall know our fate this very day.

MAR. And now, what have we got to say about our love affair? You say nothing to me about that.

Gr.-R. When people like us want to get married it is very soon done. I want you. Do you want me also?

MAR. Rather.

GR.-R. Shake hands on it. Agreed. MAR. Farewell, Gros-René, my love.

GR.-R. Farewell, star of my life.

MAR. Farewell, dear match to my flame.

Gr.-R. Farewell, my comet, rainbow of my soul.
God be thanked! our love affairs get on all right.
Albert is not the man to refuse you anything.

Er. Here is Valère coming.

GR.-R. I pity the poor brute, knowing what has happened.

Scene III

Éraste, Valère, Gros-René

Ér. Well, seigneur Valère? VAL. Well, seigneur Éraste? ÉR. En quel état l'amour?

VAL. En quel état vos feux?

Plus forts de jour en jour.

VAL. Et mon amour plus fort.

Ér. Pour Lucile? Val.

Pour elle?

ÉR. Certes, je l'avouerai, vous êtes le modèle

D'une rare constance.

VAL. Et votre fermeté Doit être un rare exemple à la postérité.

ÉR. Pour moi, je suis peu fait à cet amour austère Qui dans les seuls regards trouve à se satisfaire, Et je ne forme point d'assez beaux sentiments Pour souffrir constamment les mauvais traitements: Enfin, quand j'aime bien, j'aime fort que l'on m'aime.

VAL. Il est très-naturel, et j'en suis bien de même : Le plus parfait objet dont je serais charmé N'aurait pas mes tributs, n'en étant point aimé.

Ér. Lucile cependant . . .

VAL. Lucile, dans son âme, Rend tout ce que je veux qu'elle rende à ma flamme.

Ér. Vous êtes donc facile à contenter?

Pas tant

Que vous pourriez penser.

Je puis croire pourtant. Sans trop de vanité, que je suis en sa grâce. VAL. Moi, je sais que j'y tiens une assez bonne place.

Er. Ne vous abusez point, croyez-moi.

VAL. Croyez-moi, Ne laissez point duper vos yeux à trop de foi.

Ér. Si j'osais vous montrer une preuve assurée Que son cœur . . . Non : votre âme en serait

altérée. VAL. Si je vous osais, moi, découvrir en secret . . .

Mais je vous facherais, et veux être discret.

ÉR. How goes your love affair? VAL. How does yours flourish?

Ér. Stronger every day.

VAL. And mine the same.

És. For Lucile.

VAL. Yes.

ÉR. Certainly I must admit you are the very model of true constancy.

Val. And your fidelity will be a rare example for

posterity.

ÉR. Well. I am little given to that austere type of love which finds its satisfaction in looks only; nor am I able to tolerate feelings so lofty as to bear constant rebuffs with equanimity. In fact, when I love deeply I long to be loved just as much in return.

VAL. That is quite natural, I feel just the same. I could never pay homage to the most perfect of women who might attract me if I were not loved

likewise.

Ér. Yet Lucile . . .

VAL. Lucile, in her heart of hearts, responds to my love just as warmly as I could desire.

En. You are easily satisfied, then? VAL. Not so much as you may think.

ÉR. And yet I may, without vanity, flatter myself that I find favour with her.

VAL. Well, I know that I have a very high place in her affection.

ÉR. Take my word for it, and do not deceive yourself.

VAL. Take my word for it, and do not take too much for granted.

ÉR. I wonder whether I dare show you positive proof that her heart . . . No; it would cut you to the heart.

VAL. I wonder whether I dare let you into my secret . . . but it would upset you, and I will be silent.

Er. Vraiment, vous me poussez, et contre mon envie, Votre présomption veut que je l'humilie. Lisez.

VAT. Ces mots sont doux.

Vous connaissez la main? Éв. VAL. Oui, de Lucile.

Hé bien? cet espoir si certain . . . VAL. (riant). Adieu, seigneur Éraste.

GR.-R. Il est fou, le bon sire: Où vient-il donc pour lui de voir le mot pour rire? ÉR. Certes il me surprend, et j'ignore, entre nous,

Quel diable de mystère est caché là-dessous. Gr.-R. Son valet vient, je pense.

Oui, je le vois paraître. Feignons, pour le jeter sur l'amour de son maître.

Scène IV

Mascarille, Éraste, Gros-René

Mas. Non, je ne trouve point d'état plus malheureux Que d'avoir un patron jeune et fort amoureux.

GR.-R. Bonjour.

MAS. Boniour.

Où tend Mascarille à cette heure? Gr.-R. Que fait-il? revient-il? va-t-il? ou s'il demeure?

Mas. Non, je ne reviens pas, car je n'ai pas été; Je ne vais pas aussi, car je suis arrêté : Et ne demeure point, car tout de ce pas même Je prétends m'en aller.

La rigueur est extrêm Doucement, Mascarille.

Ha! Monsieur, serviteur. Mas. Ér. Vous nous fuyez bien vite! Hé quoi? vous fais-

je peur? Mas. Je ne crois pas cela de votre courtoisie.

ÉR. Touche: nous n'avons plus sujet de jalousie:

Én. Really you drive me to extremes, and, though it it is against my will, I must humble your presumption. Read that.

VAL. What touching language.

ÉR. You recognise the hand-writing?

VAL. Yes, Lucile's.

Ér. Well, are you now so sure . . ,

VAL. (laughing). Farewell, seigneur Éraste.

GR.-R. The fellow must be out of his senses: what ever does he see in it to make him laugh?

Én. It astounds me; and neither can I imagine what the deuce of a mystery is hidden beneath all this.

GR.-R. I think this is his valet.

Én. Yes, I see him. Let us put on a false air to set him chattering about his master's passion.

Scene IV

Mascarille, Éraste, Gros-René

Mas. No, I do not think there could be anything more wretched than to be employed by a master who is young and deeply in love.

GR.-R. Good-day. MAS. Good-day.

Gr.-R. Where is Mascarille off to now? What is he up to now? Is he coming back? Is he going away? or is he staying still?

Mas. No, I am not returning, for I have not been there yet. I am not going either, because I am stopped short; and I am not staying where I am, for I intend to be off this very instant.

Ér. You need not be in such a hurry. Stay, Mas-

carille.

Mas. Ha! Monsieur, your servant.

Ér. Why do you want to run away from us like this? Are you afraid of me?

Mas. I know you are too courteous to make me afraid of you.

ÉR. Shake hands: we need no longer be jealous of

Nous devenons amis, et mes feux, que j'éteins, Laissent la place libre à vos heureux desseins.

Mas. Plût à Dieu!

Ér. Gros-René sait qu'ailleurs je me jette.

Gr.-R. Sans doute, et je te cède aussi la Marinette.

Mas. Passons sur ce point-là: notre rivalité N'est pas pour en venir à grande extrémité. Mais est-ce un coup bien sûr que Votre Seigneurie Soit désenamourée, ou si c'est raillerie?

Én. J'ai su qu'en ses amours ton maître était tropbien:

Dien ,

Et je serais un fou de prétendre plus rien Aux étroites faveurs qu'il a de cette belle.

Mas. Certes vous me plaisez avec cette nouvelle.

Outre qu'en nos projets je vous craignais un peu,
Vous tirez sagement votre épingle du jeu.

Oui, vous avez bien fait de quitter une place
Où l'on vous caressait pour la seule grimace;
Et mille fois, sachant tout ce qui se passait,
J'ai plaint le faux espoir dont on vous repaissait:
On offense un brave homme alors que l'on l'abuse.
Mais d'où diantre, après tout, avez-vous su la ruse?
Car cet engagement mutuel de leur foi

N'eut pour témoins, la nuit, que deux autres et moi;

Et l'on croit jusqu'ici la chaîne fort secrète, Qui rend de nos amants la flamme satisfaite.

Én. Hé! que dis-tu?

Mas. Je dis que je suis interdit,
Et ne sais pas, Monsieur, qui peut vous avoir dit
Que sous ce faux semblant, qui trompe tout le
monde.

En vous trompant aussi, leur ardeur sans seconde D'un secret mariage a serré le lien.

Ér. Vous en avez menti.

Mas. Monsieur, je le veux bien.

one another; we must be friends. There is an end to my love affair, and so the field is open for you to range in as much as you please.

Mas. Would to heaven it were so!

Ér. Gros-René knows that I have turned my fancy elsewhere.

Gr.-R. It is quite true, and you can have Marinette also.

Mas. We need not talk about that: our rivalry will not go to such lengths. But is it really true, my lord, that you are disenchanted, or is it a joke?

Ér. I have learnt that your master is only too successful in his amours, and I should be a fool to sue any longer for the secret favours this fair lady bestows on him.

Mas. You do indeed delight me with this news. Although I was a little afraid you might thwart our plans, yet you are very wise, on your own account, to give up the struggle. You have, indeed, done well to turn your back on a house in which you are only treated as a lover in order to be taken in. Knowing all that was going on, I have pitied you a thousand times, for the false hopes that gulled you. It is a shame to deceive a straightforward man in that way. But how the deuce came you to discover the trick? For when they plighted their troth that night there were only myself and two other witnesses, and the betrothal which has made our true lovers very happy has, hitherto, been thought to be a profound secret.

ÉR. Eh? What do you say?

Mas. I only said I was puzzled, Monsieur. I cannot imagine who can have told you that, under the disguise which has deceived everybody, yourself included, these two ardent lovers have secretly contracted a marriage.

Ér. You lie.

Mas. Monsieur, I am your humble servant.

Ér. Vous êtes un coquin.

MAS. D'accord.

Éĸ. Et cette audace Mériterait cent coups de bâton sur la place.

Mas. Vous avez tout pouvoir.

Éв. Ha! Gros-René.

GR.-R. Monsieur.

ÉR. Je démens un discours dont je n'ai que trop peur. (A Mascarille.)

Tu penses fuir?

MAS. Nenni.

ÉR. Quoi? Lucile est la femme...

Mas. Non, Monsieur : je raillais.

Ah! vous raillez, infàme! Mas. Non, je ne raillais point.

Éĸ Il est donc vrai? MAS. Non pas,

Je ne dis pas cela.

Que dis-tu donc?

MAS. Hélas!

Je ne dis rien, de peur de mal parler.

Ou si c'est chose vraie, ou si c'est imposture.

Mas. C'est ce qu'il vous plaira : je ne suis pas ici Pour vous rien contester.

Veux-tu dire? Voici. Sans marchander, de quoi te délier la langue.

Mas. Elle ira faire encor quelque sotte harangue! Hé! de grâce, plutôt, si vous le trouvez bon, Donnez-moi vitement quelques coups de bâton, Et me laissez tirer mes chausses sans murmure. ÉR. Tu mourras, ou je veux que la vérité pure

S'exprime par ta bouche.

MAS. Hélas! je la dirai; Mais peut-être, Monsieur, que je vous fâcherai. Én. Parle; mais prends bien garde à ce que tu vas

faire: A ma juste fureur rien ne te peut soustraire,

Si tu mens d'un seul mot en ce que tu diras.

Er. You are a knave.

Mas. That I grant you.

ÉR. And you richly deserve a sound thrashing for your impudence.

Mas. I am entirely at your service.

Ér. Ah! Gros-René.

GR.-R. Monsieur.

ÉR. I give the lie to a story which I fear is only . . . (To Mascarille.) Are you trying to run away?

Mas. Nothing of the kind.

ÉR. So? Lucile is the wife . . .

Mas. No. Monsieur: I was but jesting.

Er. Ah! you were jesting, you scoundrel!

Mas. No, I was not jesting.

ÉR. It is true, then?

Mas. No, I do not say that.

ÉR. What do you say then?

Mas. Alas! I am not saying anything, for fear of putting my foot in it.

En. Tell me straight out whether this be true or a fabrication?

Mas. It is just what you please: I did not come here to contradict you in any way.

ER. Well, if you will not tell me, here is something which will loosen your tongue without any more

haggling.

Mas. It is sure to give vent to some foolishness or other. If you please, I would much rather you gave me a whacking quickly, and then let me take to my heels without any more ado.

Ér. You shall die unless you tell me the unadulterated truth.

Mas. Alas! I will tell it, but I may annoy you, Monsieur.

Ér. Speak; but take good care what you are about: nothing shall stand between you and my righteous anger if you say a single word that is not true.

Mas. J'y consens, rompez-moi les jambes et les bras, Faites-moi pis encor, tuez-moi, si j'impose En tout ce que j'ai dit ici la moindre chose.

Ér. Ce mariage est vrai?

MAS. Ma langue, en cet endroit, A fait un pas de clerc dont elle s'apercoit; Mais enfin cette affaire est comme vous la dites. Et c'est après cinq jours de nocturnes visites. Tandis que vous serviez à mieux couvrir leur jeu, Que depuis avant-hier ils sont joints de ce nœu; Et Lucile depuis fait encor moins paraître La violente amour qu'elle porte à mon maître, Et veut absolument que tout ce qu'il verra, Et qu'en votre faveur son cœur témoignera, Il l'impute à l'effet d'une haute prudence Qui veut de leurs secrets ôter la connaissance. Si malgré mes serments vous doutez de ma foi. Gros-René peut venir une nuit avec moi. Et je lui ferai voir, étant en sentinelle. Que nous avons dans l'ombre un libre accès chez elle.

Ér. Ôte-toi de mes yeux, maraud.

Mas. Et de grand cœur;

, C'est ce que je demande.

Ér. Hé bien?

Gr.-R. Hé bien, Monsieur, Nous en tenons tous deux, si l'autre est véritable.

Ém. Las! il ne l'est que trop, le bourreau détestable. Je vois trop d'apparence à tout ce qu'il a dit; Et ce qu'a fait Valère, en voyant cet écrit, Marque bien leur concert, et que c'est une baye Qui sert sans doute aux feux dont l'ingrate le paye.

Scène V

MARINETTE, GROS-RENÉ, ÉRASTE.

Mar. Je viens vous avertir que tantôt sur le soir Ma maîtresse au jardin vous permet de la voir. Mas. By all means; break my legs and arms, do still worse to me; kill me, if I have in any way deceived you in anything I have said.

Én. Is this marriage a fact?

Mas. With respect to that, I am afraid my tongue made a little slip; but, nevertheless, the thing is just as I told you; after five nocturnal meetings, whilst you were made to act gooseberry, they were betrothed the day before yesterday. Since then, Lucile has done her utmost to hide her passionate love for my master, and has given him to understand that he must put down all the attentions he sees her pay to you to the intense caution necessary to prevent their secret being known. If, in spite of what I say, you doubt my word, let Gros-René come and spend a night with me, and I will show him, whilst I mount guard. that there is free access to her house, when it is dark.

ÉR. Get out of my sight, you rascal. Mas. With all the pleasure in the world; that is just what I have been longing for. Er. Well?

GR.-R. Well, Monsieur, we have both been de-

ceived, if this fellow is right.

Er. Oh! it is but too true, the detestable villain. I see that all he has said is only too likely. Valère's bearing when he saw this writing showed plainly that they were on good terms with each other; and it is a blind designed by the faithless girl, no doubt, to put people off the scent.

Scene V

MARINETTE, GROS-RENÉ, ÉRASTE

MAR. I have come to tell you that as soon as it is evening my mistress will allow you to come and see her in the garden.

Ém. Oses-tu me parler, âme double et traîtresse?
Va, sors de ma présence, et dis à ta maîtresse
Qu'avecque ses écrits elle me laisse en paix,
Et que voilà l'état, infame, que j'en fais.

Man. Gros-René, dis-moi donc quelle mouche le pique?

GR.-R. M'oses-tu bien encor parler, femelle inique, Crocodile trompeur, de qui le cœur félon Est pire qu'un satrape ou bien qu'un Lestrygon? Va, va rendre réponse à ta bonne maîtresse, Et lui dis bien et beau que, malgré sa souplesse, Nous ne sommes plus sots, ni mon maître, ni moi, Et désormais qu'elle aille au diable avecque toi.

Mar. Ma pauvre Marinette, est-tu bien éveillée? De quel démon est donc leur ame travaillée? Quoi? faire un tel accueil à nos soins obligeants! Oh! que ceci chez nous va surprendre les gens!

FIN DU PREMIER ACTE

ACTE II

Scène I

ASCAGNE, FROSINE

FRo. Ascagne, je suis fille à secret, Dieu merci.

As. Mais, pour un tel discours, sommes-nous bien ici?

Prenons garde qu'aucun ne nous vienne surprendre, Ou que de quelque endroit on ne nous puisse entendre.

Fro. Nous serions au logis beaucoup moins sûrement: Ici de tous côtés on découvre aisément, Et nous pouvons parler avec toute assurance. Én. How dare you talk to me, you double-faced traitress? Get away from my sight, and tell your mistress she need not trouble me any longer with her letters; that is how I treat them, you wretch.

MAR. Tell me, Gros-René, what dog has bitten him

now:

GR.-R. How dare you go on talking to me, you iniquitous female, you hypocritical crocodile, whose base heart is worse than a satrap's or a Lestrygon's? Go, take your answer to your lovely mistress and tell her, without mincing your words, that, in spite of her cunning, my master and I are neither of us fools, and that henceforth she may go to the devil and you along with her.

MAR. Come, Marinette, are you sleeping or awake? What demon has got possession of their souls now? What? To receive our gracious favours in such a fashion as this! Oh! won't this surprise them all

in our house.

END OF THE FIRST ACT

ACT II.

Scene I

ASCAGNE, FROSINE

FRO. Thank Heaven I can keep a secret, Ascagne,

though I am a girl.

As. But are we safe here to talk about such matters?

Do let us be careful no one surprises us, or that
we are not overheard from some quarter or other.

FRO. We should be much less safe inside the house; we can easily see any one coming where we are, no matter from what direction, and we can talk without any fear.

As. Hélas! que j'ai de peine à rompre mon silence!

Fro. Ouais! ceci doit donc être un important secret.

As. Trop, puisque je le fie à vous-même à regret, Et que si je pouvais le cacher davantage, Vous ne le sauriez point.

Fro. Ha! c'est me faire outrage, Feindre à s'ouvrir à moi, dont vous avez connu Dans tous vos intérêts l'esprit si retenu! Moi nourrie avec vous, et qui tiens sous silence Des choses qui vous sont de si grande importance! Qui sais . . .

As. Oui, vous savez la secrète raison
Qui cache aux yeux de tous mon sexe et ma
maison;

Vous savez que dans celle où passa mon bas âge Je suis pour y pouvoir retenir l'héritage Que relâchait ailleurs le jeune Ascagne mort, Dont mon déguisement fait revivre le sort; Et c'est aussi pourquoi ma bouche se dispense A vous ouvrir mon cœur avec plus d'assurance. Mais avant que passer, Frosine, à ce discours, Éclaircissez un doute où je tombe toujours: Se pourrait-il qu'Albert ne sût rien du mystère Qui masque ainsi mon sexe. et l'a rendu mon père

Qui masque ainsi mon sexe, et l'a rendu mon père?
Fro. En bonne foi, ce point sur quoi vous me pressez
Est une affaire aussi qui m'embarrasse assez:
Le fond de cette intrigue est pour moi lettre close,
Et ma mère ne put m'éclaircir mieux la chose.
Quand il mourut ce fils, l'objet de tant d'amour,
Au destin de qui, même avant qu'il vînt au jour,
Le testament d'un oncle abondant en richesses
D'un soin particulier avait fait des largesses,
Et que sa mère fit un secret de sa mort,
De son époux absent redoutant le transport,
S'il voyait chez un autre aller tout l'héritage
Dont sa maison tirait un si grand avantage;
Quand, dis-je, pour cacher un tel événement,
La supposition fut de son sentiment,

As. Alas! How difficult it is for me to break my silence!

Fro. Come, this looks like being a very important secret.

As. It is, since I even grudge confiding it to you; if I could hide it any longer, even you should not know it.

Fro. Oh! You wrong me. Why do you hesitate to unbosom yourself to me when I have always kept your affairs to myself? I was brought up with you, and have kept silence about anything that was of great importance to you. I know . . .

As. Yes, you know the secret reason which makes me hide my sex and my family from the eyes of all; you know I have passed my earliest years here in personifying the dead boy Ascagne in order to retain the inheritance which would otherwise have gone elsewhere; that is why I dare talk to you and open my heart to you all the more readily. But before we talk about this matter, Frosine, I want you to solve a doubt which haunts me constantly. Do you think Albert knows nothing of the mystification which hides my sex and makes him my father?

Fro. To tell you the truth, I am as puzzled over the matter you speak of as you are yourself. I have never been able to fathom that intrigue, nor has my mother been able to throw any more light on it. When her beloved son died, his mother kept his death secret, because he had inherited, even before his birth, enormous wealth through the will of a rich uncle, and she feared that it would drive her absent husband distracted to see another in possession of all the money which conferred so many advantages on his house. Therefore, in order to keep the death quiet, the plan was conceived, you were taken away from our house, where you had been brought up (your mother consenting to

Et qu'on vous prit chez nous, où vous étiez nourrie (Votre mère d'accord de cetté tromperie Qui remplacait ce fils à sa garde commis), En faveur des présents le secret fut promis. Albert ne l'a point su de nous; et pour sa femme, L'avant plus de douze ans conservé dans son âme. Comme le mal fut prompt dont on la vit mourir, Son trépas imprévu ne put rien découvrir ; Mais cependant je vois qu'il garde intelligence Avec celle de qui vous tenez la naissance ; J'ai su qu'en secret même il lui faisait du bien, Et peut-être cela ne se fait pas pour rien. D'autre part, il vous veut porter au mariage, Et comme il le prétend, c'est un mauvais langage: Je ne sais s'il saurait la supposition Sans le déguisement. Mais la digression Tout insensiblement pourrait trop loin s'étendre: Revenons au secret que je brûle d'apprendre.

As. Sachez donc que l'Amour ne sait point s'abuser, Que mon sexe à ses yeux n'a pu se déguiser, Et que ses traits subtils, sous l'habit que je porte, Ont su trouver le cœur d'une fille peu forte: J'aime enfin.

FRO. Vous aimez?

Frosine, doucement; N'entrez pas tout à fait dedans l'étonnement : Il n'est pas temps encore; et ce cœur qui soupire A bien, pour vous surprendre, autre chose à vous dire.

Fro. Et quoi?

As. J'aime Valère.

Fro. Ha! vous avez raison. L'objet de votre amour, lui, dont à la maison Votre imposture enlève un puissant héritage, Et qui de votre sexe avant le moindre ombrage, Verrait incontinent ce bien lui retourner! C'est encore un plus grand sujet de s'étonner.

As. J'ai de quoi toutefois surprendre plus votre âme: Je suis sa femme.

the deceit, so that you might fill the place of the lost son). The secret was kept by means of bribes. Albert has never learned it through us; and his wife, after having kept the secret for more than twelve years, died suddenly without revealing it. But I see that he keeps up acquaintance with your mother, and I understand that, in private, he even assists her with money: perhaps he has some motive for so doing. On the other hand, he wants you to marry. Here he makes a mistake; perhaps he knows you have been substituted, without knowing of the disguised sex. But this digression will, little by little, lead us far away from our point; let us return to the secret. I am burning to know what it is.

As. Well, Cupid cannot be deceived. I have not been able to hide my sex from him; his subtle darts have penetrated the disguise of my dress and struck the heart of a weak girl. In short, I am in love!

FRO. You are in love!

As. Gently, Frosine; you need not be surprised just yet—wait till you hear all; this love-sick heart has much more to tell you that will surprise you.

FRo. Well?

As. I love Valère.

Fno. Ah! You do indeed astonish me! You love the man whose family has been robbed of a great inheritance by means of your deceit, and who, if he had the faintest suspicion what was your real sex, would at once become possessed of his fortune! This news is indeed more astonishing than even the last.

As. Nevertheless, I have a still greater surprise in store for you: I am his wife.

Fro. Oh Dieux! sa femme!

As. Oui, sa femme.

Fro. Ha! certes celui-là l'emporte, et vient à bout De toute ma raison.

As. Ce n'est pas encor tout.

Fro. Encore?

As. Je la suis, dis-je, sans qu'il le pense, Ni qu'il ait de mon sort la moindre connaissance.

Fno. Ho! poussez: je le quitte, et ne raisonne plus, Tant mes sens coup sur coup se trouvent confondus. A ces énigmes-là je ne puis rien comprendre.

As. Je vais vous l'expliquer, si vous voulez m'entendre.

Valère, dans les fers de ma sœur arrêté,
Me semblait un amant digne d'être écouté;
Et je ne pouvais voir qu'on rebutât sa flamme
Sans qu'un peu d'intérêt touchât pour lui mon âme:
Je voulais que Lucile aimât son entretien,
Je blâmais ses rigueurs, et les blâmai si bien,
Que moi-même j'entrai, sans pouvoir m'en défendre,
Dans tous les sentiments qu'elle ne pouvait prendre,
C'était, en lui parlant, moi qu'il persuadait;
Je me laissais gagner aux soupirs qu'il perdait;
Et ses vœux, rejetés de l'objet qui l'enflamme,
Étaient, comme vainqueurs, reçus dedans mon âme.
Ainsi mon cœur, Frosine, un peu trop faible,
hélas!

Se rendit à des soins qu'on ne lui rendait pas,
Par un coup réfléchi reçut une blessure,
Et paya pour un autre avec beaucoup d'usure.
Enfin, ma chère, enfin l'amour que j'eus pour lui
Se voulut expliquer, mais sous le nom d'autrui:
Dans ma bouche, une nuit, cet amant trop aimable
Crut rencontrer Lucile à ses vœux favorable;
Et je sus ménager si bien cet entretien,
Que du déguisement il ne reconnut rien.
Sous ce voile trompeur, qui flattait sa pensée,
Je lui dis que pour lui mon âme était blessée,
Mais que voyant mon père en d'autres sentiments,

FRO. Good Heavens! His wife!

As. Yes, his wife.

Fro. Ah! this is beyond everything; it is enough to drive one mad.

As. Even that is not all.

FRO. Still more?

As. I am his wife, as I have said, but it is unknown to him, and without his having the least idea who I am.

Fro. Oh this is too much. I give it up, I will say no more. You confound me with these riddles one after the other. I cannot understand them at all.

As. I am going to explain them to you, if you will only listen to me. Valère, who fell in love with my sister, struck me as being a lover well worth having; I could not bear to see him pay slighted addresses without feeling a secret sympathy for him. I wanted Lucile to take pleasure in his advances and I blamed her coldness with such warmth that I myself became affected with the passion she could not feel for him, before I knew what I was doing. It was I who persuaded and allowed myself to be overcome by the sighs and words he addressed to her; his love, rejected by my sister, rebounded on me and made me captive. Thus, alas! my poor weak heart, Frosine, responded to a love not intended for it; it was wounded by an arrow aimed at another, and paid the debt of another with heavy interest. At last, my dear, my love for him forced me to reveal myself, but under another name. One night, this too ardent lover thought Lucile was beginning to yield to his entreaties because I imitated her voice, and I managed so well that he never pierced through my disguise. By these deceitful means, which thoroughly deluded him, I told him I loved him, but that, as my father had other intentions with regard to me, I must make a pretence of obeying his wishes; and, that being so, we must keep our passion secret, of which only night should be aware, Je devais une feinte à ses commandements;
Qu'ainsi de notre amour nous ferions un mystère
Dont la nuit seulement serait dépositaire,
Et qu'entre nous de jour, de peur de rien gâter,
Tout entretien secret se devait éviter;
Qu'il me verrait alors la même indifférence
Qu'avant que nous eussions aucune intelligence;
Et que de son côté, de même que du mien,
Geste, parole, écrit ne m'en dit jamais rien.
Enfin, sans m'arrêter sur toute l'industrie
Dont j'ai conduit le fil de cette tromperie,
J'ai poussé jusqu'au bout un projet si hardi,
Et me suis assuré l'époux que je vous di.

Fro. Peste! les grands talents que votre esprit possède!

Dirait-on qu'elle y touche avec sa mine froide? Cependant vous avez été bien vite ici; Car je veux que la chose ait d'abord réussi: Ne jugez-vous pas bien, à regarder l'issue, Qu'elle ne peut longtemps éviter d'ires sue?

As. Quand l'amour est bien fort, rien ne peut l'arrêter;

Ses projets seulement vont à se contenter, Et pourvu qu'il arrive au but qu'il se propose, Il croit que tout le reste après est peu de chose. Mais enfin aujourd'hui je me découvre à vous, Afin que vos conseils . . . Mais voici cet époux.

Scène II

VALÈRE, ASCAGNE, FROSINE

Val. Si vous êtes tous deux en quelque conférence Où je vous fasse tort de mêler ma présence, Je me retirerai.

As. Non, non, vous pouvez bien,
Puisque vous le faisiez, rompre notre entretien.
Val. Moi?

As. Vous-même.

Val. Et comment

and hold no converse during daytime for fear of discovery; we arranged that he should show the same indifference towards me that he did before we came to this understanding, and, neither on his side, nor on mine, should any communication take place by sign, word of mouth, or letter. Finally, without going into every detail of all the pains I took to bring my plot to a successful issue, my bold scheme came to a happy end, and, as I have said, he became my husband.

Fro. Upon my word! You are a clever girl, indeed! Who would imagine it, to look at your impassive face? But you have been rather hasty. So far, I admit, the plan has succeeded, but do you not realise that there must come a time when it cannot be kept secret any longer?

As. When love is strong, it stops at nothing; its only wish is to satisfy its imperious desires. It does not care a straw what happens afterwards provided it attains its end. Now, I have disclosed everything to you so that your advice... But here comes my husband.

Scene II

VALÈRE, ASCAGNE, FROSINE

Val. If you are talking in confidence together, and my presence interrupts you, I will go away.

As. No, no, your interruption is opportune, as we were talking of you.

VAL. Of me?

As. Of you.

VAL. What about?

As. Je disais que Valère
Aurait, si j'étais fille, un peu trop su me plaire,
Et que si je faisais tous les vœux de son cœur,

Et que si je faisais tous les vœux de son cœur, Je ne tarderais guère à faire son bonheur. Val. Ces protestations ne coûtent pas grand'chose,

Alors qu'à leur effet un pareil si s'oppose;
Mais vous seriez bien pris, si quelque événement
Allait mettre à l'épreuve un si doux compliment.
As. Point du tout; je vous dis que régnant dans votre
âme.

Je voudrais de bon cœur couronner votre flamme. Val. Et si c'était quelqu'une où par votre secours Vous pussiez être utile au bonheur de mes jours? As. Je pourrais assez mal répondre à votre attente.

Val. Cette confession n'est pas fort obligeante.
As. Hé quoi? vous voudriez, Valère, injustement,
Qu'étant fille, et mon cœur vous aimant tendrement,

Je m'allasse engager avec une promesse De servir vos ardeurs pour quelque autre maîtresse? Un si pénible effort, pour moi, m'est interdit.

VAL. Mais cela n'étant pas?

As. Ce que je vous ai dit, Je l'ai dit comme fille, et vous le devez prendre Tout de même.

Val. Ainsi donc il ne faut rien prétendre, Ascagne, à des bontés que vous auriez pour nous, A moins que le Ciel fasse un grand miracle en vous. Bref, si vous n'êtes fille, adieu votre tendresse: Il ne vous reste rien qui pour nous s'intéresse.

As. J'ai l'esprit délicat plus qu'on ne peut penser, Et le moindre scrupule a de quoi m'offenser, Quand il s'agit d'aimer. Enfin je suis sincère: Je ne m'engage point à vous servir, Valère, Si vous ne m'assurez au moins absolument Que vous gardez pour moi le même sentiment, Que pareille chaleur d'amitié vous transporte, Et que si j'étais fille, une flamme plus forte N'outragerait point celle où je vivrais pour vous.

As. I was saving that had I been a girl, Valère, you would have taken my fancy only too well and that were I solely beloved by you I should not have let

you wait long for your happiness.

VAL. Such statements do not cost anything when there is an 'if' in the way. But you would be nicely caught if some miracle should put the truth of your charming compliments to the proof.

As. Not in the least; I tell you that if you did, indeed,

love me. I would gladly give you all.

VAL. And how if you could aid me to be happy with the girl I love?

As. I should not respond to your wishes with much

alacrity.

VAL. That is not a very obliging admission.

As. What? Suppose I were a girl, Valère, and loved you with all my heart, would you be so cruel as to wish me to promise aid in your wooing of another mistress? I would never undertake such a painful task.

VAL. But not being a girl?

As. What I have said to you I have said imagining myself in a girl's place, and you must take it in

that light.

VAL. Then I am not to hope for your good will and help. Ascagne, unless Heaven works a great miracle in you. In fact, as you are not a girl, there is an end to your tender feelings towards me; and no

cause for a kindly interest in me remains.

As. My feelings are more sensitive than people think: the slightest scruple distresses me if it is connected with love. But I am sincere, Valère, and I will not promise to help you unless you solemnly swear to me that you respond to the affection I have for you, that you entertain the same warm feelings of friendship for me I do towards you, and that, were I a girl, you would love me as passionately as I should love you.

Val. Je n'avais jamais vu ce scrupule jaloux;
Mais, tout nouveau qu'il est, ce mouvement m'oblige.

Et je vous fais ici tout l'aveu qu'il exige.

As. Mais sans fard?

Val. Oui, sans fard.

As. S'il est vrai, désormais Vos intérêts seront les miens, je vous promets.
VAL. J'ai bientôt à vous dire un important mystère,
Où l'effet de ces mots me sera nécessaire.

As. Et j'ai quelque secret de même à vous ouvrir, Où votre cœur pour moi se pourra découvrir. Val. Hé! de quelle façon cela pourrait-il être? As. C'est que j'ai de l'amour qui n'oserait paraître;

Et vous pourriez avoir sur l'objet de mes vœux Un empire à pouvoir rendre mon sort heureux.

Val. Expliquez-vous, Ascagne, et croyez, par avance, Que votre heur est certain, s'il est en ma puissance.

As. Vous promettez ici plus que vous ne croyez.

Val. Non, non: dites l'objet pour qui vous m'employez.

As. Il n'est pas encor temps; mais c'est une personne

Qui vous touche de près.

Val. Votre discours m'étonne.

Plût à Dieu que ma sœur . . . Ce n'est pas la saison

De m'expliquer, vous dis-je.
VAL. Et pourquoi?

As. Pour raison.
Vous saurez mon secret, quand je saurai le vôtre.

Val. J'ai besoin pour cela de l'aveu de quelque autre.

As. Ayez-le donc; et lors nous expliquant nos vœux, Nous verrons qui tiendra mieux parole des deux.

VAL. Adieu, j'en suis content.

Val. I have never heard of such jealous fancies. But, though it is all new to me, I feel, in view of your avowal, that I must promise you all you ask of me.

As. Really, sincerely?

VAL. Yes, sincerely.

As. If this be so I promise henceforth to make your interests mine.

Val. I have an important secret which I must tell you, shortly, and your declarations will then be put to the test.

As. I, too, have a secret to tell you which will prove the sincerity of your promises.

VAL. Indeed! what is the nature of your secret?

As. I have a love affair which I dare not disclose, and you have sufficient influence over the being I love to make my lot happy.

Val. Explain yourself, Ascagne. You may rest assured beforehand, that, if it lies in my power, your happiness is secure.

As. You are now promising more than you think you

Val. No, no, tell me the name of the girl you wish me to influence.

As. The time has not come yet, but it is some one closely related to you.

VAL. Your words astound me. Would to Heaven my sister . . .

As. I tell you, this is not the time to reveal my secret to you.

VAL. Why not?

As. For good reason. You shall know my secret when I know yours.

Val. But I must first obtain leave from some one else.

As. Then obtain it, and when we have confided in each other we shall see which of us will best keep the promise made.

VAL. Farewell, I agree to the challenge.

As. Et moi content, Valère. Fro. Il croit trouver en vous l'assistance d'un frère.

Scène III

FROSINE, ASCAGNE, MARINETTE, LUCILE

Luc. C'en est fait: c'est ainsi que je me puis venger; Et si cette action a de quoi l'affliger, C'est toute la douceur que mon cœur s'y propose. Mon frère, vous voyez une métamorphose: Je veux chérir Valère après tant de fierté, Et mes vœux maintenant tournent de son côté.

As. Que dites-vous, ma sœur? Comment? courir au change!

Cette inégalité me semble trop étrange.

Luc. La vôtre me surprend avec plus de sujet:

De vos soins autrefois Valère était l'objet;

Je vous ai vu pour lui m'accuser de caprice,

D'aveugle cruauté, d'orgueil et d'injustice:

Et quand je veux l'aimer, mon dessein vous déplaît,

Et je vous vois parler contre son intérêt!

As. Je le quitte, ma sœur, pour embrasser le vôtre: Je sais qu'il est rangé dessous les lois d'une autre, Et ce serait un trait honteux à vos appas, Si vous le rappeliez et qu'il ne revînt pas.

Luc. Si ce n'est que cela, j'aurai soin de ma gloire; Et je sais, pour son cœur, tout ce que j'en dois croire:

Il s'explique à mes yeux intelligiblement.
Ainsi découvrez-lui sans peur mon sentiment,
Ou si vous refusez de le faire, ma bouche
Lui va faire savoir que son ardeur me touche.
Quoi? mon frère, à ces mots vous restez interdit?
As. Ha! ma sœur, si sur vous je puis avoir crédit.

Si vous êtes sensible aux prières d'un frère, Quittez un tel dessein, et n'ôtez point Valère As. And I also, Valère.

FRO. He thinks you mean to help him as a friendly brother would.

Scene III

FROSINE, ASCAGNE, MARINETTE, LUCILE

- Luc. I have it: this is how I shall be able to revenge myself; and, so long as it pains him, I cannot wish for anything better. Brother, you will see a change in me; after all the haughtiness I have shown towards Valère I have made up my mind to love him, and to turn my affections upon him.
- As. What do you mean, sister, by such a sudden change as this? Such inconstancy is surely very odd!
- Luc. Your change of attitude surprises me even more. Formerly you thought of nothing but Valère, and accused me of caprice, blind cruelty, pride and injustice. But when I tell you I intend to love him, you are vexed, and take sides against him.
- As. I desert his cause, sister, to defend yours. I know he is under the influence of another, and it will seem as though your charms were despised, if you were to try to win him back and he refuse to return.
- Luc. If that is all, I shall take care I succeed; I know all I need to know of the state of his heart; he has shown me his feelings clearly. Therefore, you may safely reveal my sentiments towards him; or, if you decline, I will let him know by my own lips that his devotion has touched me. Why do you look like that, brother, at my words?
- As. Oh, sister, if I have any influence over you, if you will but listen to a brother's words, do give up this design and do not attempt to make Valère

Aux vœux d'un jeune objet dont l'intérêt m'est cher,

Et qui, sur ma parole, a droit de vous toucher. La pauvre infortunée aime avec violence; A moi seul de ses feux elle fait confidence, Et je vois dans son cœur de tendres mouvements A dompter la fierté des plus durs sentiments. Oui, vous auriez pitié de l'état de son âme, Connaissant de quel coup vous menacez sa flamme, Et je ressens si bien la douleur qu'elle aura, Que je suis assuré, ma sœur, qu'elle en mourra, Si vous lui dérobez l'amant qui peut lui plaire. Eraste est un parti qui doit vous satisfaire, Et des feux mutuels . . .

Luc. Mon frère, c'est assez:
Je ne sais point pour qui vous vous intéressez;
Mais, de grâce, cessons ce discours, je vous prie,
Et me laissez un peu dans quelque rêverie.
As. Allez, cruelle sœur, vous me désespérez,
Si vous effectuez vos desseins déclarés.

Scène IV

MARINETTE, LUCILE

Mar. La résolution, Madame, est assez prompte.

Luc. Un cœur ne pèse rien alors que l'on l'affronte; Il court à sa vengeance, et saisit promptement Tout ce qu'il croît servir à son ressentiment. Le traître! faire voir cette insolence extrême! Mar. Vous m'en voyez encor toute hors de moimême;

Et quoique là-dessus je rumine sans fin, L'aventure me passe, et j'y perds mon latin. Car enfin, aux transports d'une bonne nouvelle Jamais cœur ne s'ouvrit d'une façon plus belle; De l'écrit obligeant le sien tout transporté Ne me donnait pas moins que de la déité; false to the promises he has given a young maid. She is dear to me, and indeed you also ought to feel sympathy for her. The poor miserable girl loves to distraction. I am the only person to whom she has revealed her passion; and her heart shows such tender love as might well melt the most disdainful and hard hearted. Yes, you would feel sorry for the pitiable state of mind into which she would be thrown when she became aware how you threatened her happiness. I know her so well, sister, that I am certain she will die of the grief it will cause her, if you take away from her the man she loves. Eraste is a lover who ought to be sufficient to satisfy you, and your mutual attachment...

Luc. Enough, brother. I have no idea in whom you take so much interest, but please cease this conversation, I pray you, and leave me for a little while to my own thoughts.

As. Your cruelty, sister, will drive me to despair if you carry out your proposed design.

Scene IV

MARINETTE, LUCILE

MAR. Your decision, Madam, has been very suddenly taken.

Luc. An outraged heart does not stop at anything; it rushes to be revenged and promptly seizes hold of anything which might further its resentment. Scoundrel! To show such insolence!

MAR. I am still quite beside myself, as you see, and, though I puzzle over the affair incessantly, it passes my comprehension and I cudgel my brains in vain. For never did a lover receive good news with greater pleasure; he was so delighted with your friendly note that he called me a divine girl; and then, when he had the other message, no girl could have been insulted more abominably. I cannot

Et cependant jamais, à cet autre message, Fille ne fut traitée avecque tant d'outrage. Je ne sais, pour causer de si grands changements, Ce qui s'est pu passer entre ces courts moments. Luc. Rien ne s'est pu passer dont il faille être en

peine,

Puisque rien ne le doit défendre de ma haine. Quoi? tu voudrais chercher hors de sa lâcheté La secrète raison de cette indignité? Cet écrit malheureux, dont mon âme s'accuse, Peut-il à son transport souffrir la moindre excuse?

MAR. En effet, je comprends que vous avez raison, Et que cette querelle est pure trahison : Nous en tenons, Madame. Et puis prêtons l'oreille

Aux bons chiens de pendards qui nous chantent merveille,

Qui pour nous accrocher feignent tant de langueur! Laissons à leurs beaux mots fondre notre rigueur. Rendons-nous à leurs vœux, trop faibles que nous sommes!

Foin de notre sottise, et peste soit des hommes! Luc. Hé bien, bien! qu'il s'en vante et rie à nos dépens:

Il n'aura pas sujet d'en triompher longtemps; Et je lui ferai voir qu'en une âme bien faite Le mépris suit de près la faveur qu'on rejette.

Mar. Au moins, en pareil cas, est-ce un bonheur bien doux

Quand on sait qu'on n'a point d'avantage sur vous. Marinette eut bon nez, quoi qu'on en puisse dire. De ne permettre rien un soir qu'on voulait rire. Quelque autre, sous espoir de matrimonion, Aurait ouvert l'oreille à la tentation :

Mais moi, nescio vos.

Luc. Que tu dis de folies, Et choisis mal ton temps pour de telles saillies! Enfin je suis touchée au cœur sensiblement: Et si jamais celui de ce perfide amant. Par un coup de bonheur, dont j'aurais tort, je pense,

think what could have happened to cause so great a change in such a short space of time.

Luc. You need not be troubled about anything that has happened, for nothing can save him from my hate. What? Do you think there is any hidden reason for this insult save his natural baseness? How could that unlucky letter I sent him, for which I heartily blame myself, afford the slightest excuse for his mad conduct?

Mar. Indeed, I am sure you are right; this quarrel is simply treachery; we have both been deceived, Madam, and yet we listen to these rascally gay dogs, because they make us such pretty speeches, and gild the pills they intend us to swallow. We are too weak to resist their attacks, and we let their fine words butter our parsnips. Shame on our folly; plague take the men!

Luc. Well, well! Let him jeer and laugh at our expense, he will not long have reason to mock at us. I will soon let him see that in a person who has common sense, hatred follows close on the heels of rejected love.

MAR. At any rate it is a very great comfort in such a case to know that we are not under their thumb and fingers. Marinette was not such a fool, in spite of all that was said, as to permit any liberties the other night when pranks were intended. Many another, putting faith in promises of matrimony, would have yielded to temptation, but nescio vos, said I.

Luc. How ridiculously you talk; it is an ill-chosen time for such jokes as these! My heart is now full of anguish; and if this unfaithful lover ever, by good luck (but I fear I have no cause at present even to hope for a chance of revenge, since Heaven appears to take a special pleasure in afflicting me),

De vouloir à présent concevoir l'espérance (Car le Ciel a trop pris plaisir à m'affliger, Pour me donner celui de me pouvoir venger), Quand, dis-je, par un sort à mes desirs propice, Il reviendrait m'offrir sa vie en sacrifice, Détester à mes pieds l'action d'aujourd'hui, Je te défends surtout de me parler pour lui: Au contraire, je veux que ton zèle s'exprime A me bien mettre aux yeux la grandeur de son crime;

Et même, si mon cœur était pour lui tenté
De descendre jamais à quelque lâcheté,
Que ton affection me soit alors sévère,
Et tienne comme il faut la main à ma colère.
Mar. Vraiment, n'ayez point peur, et laissez faire à
nous:

J'ai pour le moins autant de colère que vous; Et je serais plutôt fille toute ma vie, Que mon gros traître aussi me redonnât envie. S'il vient . . .

Scène V

MARINETTE, LUCILE, ALBÉRT

Alb. Rentrez, Lucile, et me faites venir Le précepteur : je veux un peu l'entretenir, Et m'informer de lui, qui me gouverne Ascagne, S'il sait point quel ennui depuis peu l'accompagne. (Il continue seul.)

En quel gouffre de soins et de perplexité
Nous jette une action faite sans équité!
D'un enfant supposé par mon trop d'avarice
Mon cœur depuis longtemps souffre bien le supplice,
Et quand je vois les maux où je me suis plongé,
Je voudrais à ce bien n'avoir jamais songé.
Tantôt je crains de voir par la fourbe éventée
Ma famille en opprobre et misère jetée;
Tantôt pour ce fils-là, qu'il me faut conserver,

if ever, I repeat, by some good luck, he were to come and offer me his life at my feet, in expiation of his recent faults, I should forbid you to plead for him in the slightest way. On the contrary, I would have you prove your loyalty to me, by reminding me constantly of the grossness of his crime; and if my heart should be seduced to degrade itself by any show of weakness towards him, let your love then show itself in severity, and keep my wrath fanned to flames.

Mar. You need have no fear about that; leave it to me; my anger is at least as great as yours. I had rather remain an old maid all my life than that my fat fellow should make me sigh after him again. If he came . . .

Scene V

MARINETTE, LUCILE, ALBERT

Alb. Go in, Lucile, and tell the tutor I want him: I wish to have some talk with him; and, as he is Ascagne's teacher, I want to find out from him if he knows the reason why Ascagne has been so dismal lately. (The rest is a monologue.) Into what a gulf of trouble and perplexity does one unjust deed plunge us! I have suffered for long because I was too avaricious and adopted a child as my dead son. When I think of the mischief which has come upon me, I wish with all my heart I had never dreamt of it. Sometimes I fear the deception will be found out and my family cast into poverty and shame; sometimes I tremble lest a hundred accidents should befall this son, just because it concerns

Je crains cent accidents qui peuvent arriver. S'il advient que dehors quelque affaire m'appelle, J'appréhende au retour cette triste nouvelle: 'Las! vous ne savez pas?' vous l'a-t-on annoncé? Votre fils a la fièvre, ou jambe, ou bras cassé.' Enfin, à tous moments, sur quoi que je m'arrête, Cent sortes de chagrins me roulent par la tête. Ha!

Scène VI

ALBERT, MÉTAPHRASTE

Mét. Mandatum tuum curo diligenter.

Alb. Maître, j'ai voulu . . .

Mér. Maître est dit a magister : C'est comme qui dirait trois fois plus grand.

Alb. Je meur Si je savais cela: mais soit, à la bonne heure!

Maître donc . . .

Mér. Poursuivez.

Alb. Je veux poursuivre aussi;
Mais ne poursuivez point, vous, d'interrompre

Donc, encore une fois, maître (c'est la troisième), Mon fils me rend chagrin; vous savez que je l'aime, Et que soigneusement je l'ai toujours nourri.

MÉT. Îl est vrai : filio non potest præferri Nisi filius.

ALB. Maître, en discourant ensemble,
Ce jargon n'est pas fort nécessaire, me semble.
Je vous crois grand latin et grand docteur juré:
Je m'en rapporte à ceux qui m'en ont assuré;
Mais dans un entretien qu'avec vous je destine
N'allez point déployer toute votre doctrine,
Faire le pédagogue, et cent mots me cracher,
Comme si vous étiez en chaire pour prêcher.
Mon père, quoiqu'il eût la tête des meilleures,
Ne m'a jamais rien fait apprendre que mes heures,

me to take great care of him. If I happen to be called away on business, I expect to hear on my return some such sad news as: 'Alas! have you not heard, has not any one told you? Your son is ill of a fever, or has broken an arm or a leg.' In fact, no matter what I do, scores of fears run through my head every hour of the day. Ha!

Scene VI

Albert, Métaphraste

MÉT. Mandatum tuum curo diligenter.

ALB. Master, I want to . . .

Mér. Master is derived from magister: it is as though you were to say, thrice greater.

ALB. Well, I certainly did not know that; but, never mind, let us to business. Master, I. . .

Mrr. Proceed.

ALB. That is just what I wished to do, but do not you proceed to interrupt me like this. Once more, then, master, and for the third time, my son troubles me greatly; you know how much I love him, and how tenderly I have always had him brought up.

Mét. Quite so: filio non potest præferri nisi filius.

ALB. I do not think this gibberish is at all needed in ordinary conversation, master. I quite think you are a clever Latin scholar and a very learned doctor, for I rely in these matters on those who told me so; but, in a conversation such as I wish to hold with you, please do not show all your scholarship-refrain from playing the pedagogue, and do not crush me under a weight of words as though you were declaiming from a pulpit. Although my father was a clear-headed man, he never taught me

Qui depuis cinquante ans dites journellement Ne sont encor pour moi que du haut allemand. Laissez donc en repos votre science auguste, Et que votre langage à mon faible s'ajuste.

Mér. Soit.

ALB. A mon fils, l'hymen semble lui faire peur, Et sur quelque parti que je sonde son cœur, Pour un pareil lien il est froid, et recule.

Mér. Peut-être a-t-il l'humeur du frère de Marc Tulle,

Dont avec Atticus le même fait sermon;

Et comme aussi les Grecs disent : 'Atanaton . . .'
Alb. Mon Dieu! maître éternel, laissez là, je vous

_ prie,

Les Grecs, les Albanais, avec l'Esclavonie, Et tous ces autres gens dont vous venez parler: Eux et mon fils n'ont rien ensemble à démêler.

Mér. Hé bien donc, votre fils?

Alb. Je ne sais si dans l'âme

Il ne sentirait point une secrète flamme:

Quelque chose le trouble, ou je suis fort déçu;

Et je l'aperçus hier, sans en être aperçu,

Dans un recoin du bois où nul ne retire.

Mér. Dans un lieu reculé du bois, voulez-vous dire, Un endroit écarté, latine, secessus;

Virgile l'a dit: Est in secessu locus . . .

ALB. Comment aurait-il pu l'avoir dit, ce Virgile, Puisque je suis certain que dans ce lieu tranquille Ame du monde enfin n'était lors que nous deux?

Mér. Virgile est nommé là comme un auteur fameux D'un terme plus choisi que le mot que vous dites, Et non comme témoin de ce que hier vous vîtes.

Alb. Et moi, je vous dis, moi, que je n'ai pas besoin De terme plus choisi, d'auteur ni de témoin, Et qu'il suffit ici de mon seul témoignage.

Mér. Il faut choisir pourtant les mots mis en usage Par les meilleurs auteurs : Tu vivendo bonos, Comme on dit, scribendo sequare peritos. anything save my prayers, and though I have said these every day for fifty years, they are still so much gibberish to me. Therefore, give your deep knowledge a rest, and modify your language to my simpler brains.

Мет. So be it.

Alb. My son seems to be afraid of getting married, and, whenever I suggest a suitable person to him, he seems quite indifferent to enter into these bonds and draws back.

Mér. Perhaps he is of the nature of the brother of Marcus Tullius, who is the subject of communications to Atticus; and also what the Greeks call 'Athanaton' . . .

Alb. For goodness' sake, you irrepressible pedant, pray have done with the Greeks and Albanians and Slavonians and all the other people you have mentioned; they have nothing whatsoever to do with my son.

MÉT. Ah! What about your son then?

Alb. I have some suspicion that a secret passion is burning in his soul. Something is troubling him, if I am not very much mistaken. I watched him yesterday, without being seen, in a corner of the wood where no one ever goes.

Mr. In a recess in the wood. You mean a remote place—in Latin. secessus; as Virgil has it: Est in

secessu locus . . .

ALB. How could that fellow Virgil have said such a thing when I am positive there was not a creature in the world beside us two in that secluded part?

Mér. I quote Virgil in this connection as a celebrated author who expressed the sense of the words you used, only in much more choice language, and not as a witness of that which you saw yesterday.

Alb. But I tell you I do not want either choicer terms or author or witness; my own evidence is

quite sufficient in my eyes.

Mer. Nevertheless, you ought to select words that are used by the best writers: Tu vivendo bonos, as the saying has it, scribendo sequare peritos.

Homme ou démon, veux-tu m'entendre sans conteste?

Mér. Quintilien en fait le précepte.

La peste Alb.

Soit du causeur!

Mér. Et dit là-dessus doctement

Un mot que vous serez bien aise assurément D'entendre.

Je serai le diable qui t'emporte, ALB. Chien d'homme! Oh! que je suis tenté d'étrange

De faire sur ce musle une application!

Mér. Mais qui cause, Seigneur, votre inflammation? Que voulez-vous de moi?

Je veux que l'on m'écoute, ALB.

Vous ai-je dit vingt fois, quand je parle. Ha! sans doute Mér.

Vous serez satisfait, s'il ne tient qu'à cela :

Je me tais.

Alb. Vous ferez sagement.

Me voilà Mér.

Tout prêt de vous ouïr.

Tant mieux. ALB.

Que je trépasse. Mér.

Si je dis plus mot. Dieu vous en fasse la grâce.

Mér. Vous n'accuserez point mon caquet désormais.

Alb. Ainsi soit-il!

Мéт. Parlez quand vous voudrez.

J'v vais. ALB.

Mér. Et n'appréhendez plus l'interruption nôtre.

ALB. C'est assez dit.

Мéт. Je suis exact plus qu'aucun autre.

Alb. Je le crois.

Мéт. J'ai promis que je ne dirais rien.

ALB. Suffit.

Мéт. Dès à présent je suis muet.

ALB. Fort bien. Mér. Parlez, courage! au moins, je vous donne audience; ALB. Man or devil, will you listen to me without arguing?

Mér. That is the rule of Quintilian.

ALB. Plague take the prater!

Mér. He has a learned phrase on the subject which I am sure you will be very pleased to hear.

ALB. I would rather be the devil to carry you off, you confounded puppy. Oh! I feel sorely tempted to stop that jaw of yours with a clout across it !

Mér. But, Seigneur, why this anger? What do you want from me?

ALB. I want you to listen to me while I speak; I have told you so a score of times.

Mér. Ah! unquestionably if that is all you want. you shall be satisfied. I will be silent.

ALB. You will do wisely.

Mér. I am quite ready to listen to you.

ALB. So much the better.

Mér. May I die rather than say another word.

ALB. Heaven grant you a good end!

MÉT. You shall not henceforth accuse me of being talkative.

ALB. Amen!

Mér. Speak when you wish.

ALB. I am just going to do so.

Mér. And do not be afraid that I shall interrupt you.

ALB. That is enough.

Mér. I am more strict than most people.

ALB. I quite believe it.

Mér. I have promised that I will not say a word.

ALB. I am glad to hear it.

Mér. From this moment I will be dumb.

ALB. Excellent.

Mér. Speak, have courage! I will at least grant

Vous ne vous plaindrez pas de mon peu de silence: Je ne desserre pas la bouche seulement.

Alb. Le traître!

Mr. Mais, de grâce, achevez vitement: Depuis longtemps j'écoute ; il est bien raisonnable Que je parle à mon tour.

Alb. Donc, bourreau détestable . . . Mér. Hé! bon Dieu! voulez-vous que j'écoute à jamais?

Partageons le parler, au moins, ou je m'en vais.

Alb. Ma patience est bien . . .

Met. Quoi? voulez-vous poursuivre? Ce n'est pas encore fait? Per Jovem! je suis ivre.

Alb. Je n'ai pas dit . . .

Mér. Encore? Bon Dieu! que de discours! Rien n'est-il suffisant d'en arrêter le cours?

Alb. J'enrage.

Mér. Derechef? Oh! l'étrange torture! Hé! laissez-moi parler un peu, je vous conjure: Un sot qui ne dit mot ne se distingue pas D'un savant qui se tait.

Alb. (s'en allant). Parbleu, tu te tairas!

Mét. D'où vient fort à propos cette sentence expresse D'un philosophe : 'Parle, afin qu'on te connaisse.' Doncques si de parler le pouvoir m'est ôté, Pour moi, j'aime autant perdre aussi l'humanité, Et changer mon essence en celle d'une bête. Me voilà pour huit jours avec un mal de tête. Oh! que les grands parleurs sont par moi détestés! Mais quoi? si les savants ne sont point écoutés, Si l'on veut que toujours ils aient la bouche close, Il faut donc renverser l'ordre de chaque chose: Que les poules dans peu dévorent les renards. Que les jeunes enfants remontrent aux vieillards, Qu'à poursuivre les loups les agnelets s'ébattent, Qu'un fou fasse les lois, que les femmes combattent, Que par les criminels les juges soient jugés Et par les écoliers les maîtres fustigés, Que le malade au sain présente le remède.

you a hearing; you shall not complain of my lack of silence: I will not even open my mouth.

ALB. You villain!

Mér. But pray do not be long-winded. I have already listened to you for a long time and it is only fair I should speak in turn.

ALB. You odious scoundrel . . .

Mér. Hey day! do you want me to listen to you for ever? Let us at least take turns in talking, or I shall go away.

ALB. My patience is quite . . .

Mr. What? You will go on talking? Have you not done yet? Per Joven, I am deafened.

ALB. I have not said a word . . .

Mér. What? Again? Great Heavens! What a talker! Will nothing stop the torrent?

ALB. You make me furious.

Mér. At it again! What refinement of torture! Stop, let me talk a little, I beseech you: a fool who does not say anything cannot be told from a wise man who does not speak.

Alb. (going away). Deuce take you, I will put an end to your chatter.

Mér. This very appropriately reminds me of the excellent saving of a philosopher: 'Speak in order that people may know thee.' Therefore, if the liberty of speech is to be taken away from me, I, forsooth, would as lief be deprived also of my humanity and be transformed into a brute. I shall have a headache, because of this, for the rest of the week. Oh! how I hate those eternal chatterers! If savants are not to be listened to, if their mouths are always to be stopped, then the order of the universe will be turned upside down: we shall soon have hens devouring foxes and infants holding forth to old men, lambs taking delight in hunting wolves, fools making laws, women becoming soldiers, judges being tried by criminals and masters being birched by their pupils; we shall see the sick prescribe for

Que le lièvre craintif . . . Miséricorde! à l'aide! (Albert lui vient sonner aux oreilles une cloche qui le fait fuir.)

FIN DU SECOND ACTE

ACTE III

Scène I

MASCARILLE

Mas. Le Ciel parfois seconde un dessein téméraire,
Et l'on sort comme on peut d'une méchante affaire.
Pour moi, qu'une imprudence a trop fait discourir,
Le remède plus prompt où j'ai su recourir,
C'est de pousser ma pointe et dire en diligence
A notre vieux patron toute la manigance.
Son fils, qui m'embarrasse, est un évaporé;
L'autre, diable! disant ce que j'ai déclaré,
Gare une irruption sur notre friperie!
Au moins, avant qu'on puisse échauffer sa furie,
Quelque chose de bon nous pourra succéder,
Et les vieillards entre eux se pourront accorder:
C'est ce qu'on va tenter; et de la part du nôtre,
Sans perdre un seul moment, je m'en vais trouver
l'autre.

Scène II

MASCARILLE, ALBERT

ALB. Qui frappe?

Mas. Amis.

ALB. Ho! ho! qui te peut amener,

Mascarille?

Mas. Je viens, Monsieur, pour vous donner Le bonjour. the well; the timid hare . . . Mercy on us! Help!
(Albert rings a bell in his ears and puts him to flight.)

END OF THE SECOND ACT

ACT III

Scene I

MASCARILLE

Mas. Heaven often favours a bold scheme; we must get out of a bad scrape as best we can. After having been so imprudent as to talk too much, the speediest remedy I could think of was to take the bull by the horns, go straight to the old master and tell him everything that has happened. His son is a feather-brained fellow, who worries the life out of me; but, if he hears what I have disclosed, he will soon give me the deuce of a hiding! However, before his anger reaches boiling point, some lucky thing may have happened, and the two old men may come to an agreement. That is what I mean to try and bring about; and now, without losing any more time, I must go and look for the other.

Scene II

Mascarille, Albert

ALB. Who is that knocking?

Mas. A friend.

Alb. Ho! ho! What brings you here, Mascarille?

Mas. I come to wish you good-day, Monsieur.

Oni.

Alb. Ha! vraiment, tu prends beaucoup de peine. De tout mon cœur, bonjour.

Mas. La réplique est soudaine.

Quel homme brusque!
Alb. Encor?

Mas. Vous n'aviez pas ouï,

Monsieur.

Alb. Ne m'as-tu pas donné le bonjour?

Mas.

Alb. Eh bien! bonjour, te dis-je.

Mas.

Oui, mais je viens encore

Vous saluer au nom du seigneur Polydore.

Alb. Ha! c'est un autre fait. Ton maître t'a chargé

De me saluer?

Mas. Oui.

Alb. Je lui suis obligé.

Va: que je lui souhaite une joie infinie. Mas. Cet homme est ennemi de la cérémonie.

Je n'ai pas achevé, Monsieur, son compliment:
Il voudrait vous prier d'une chose instamment.

Alb. Hé bien! quand il voudra, je suis à son service.

Mas. Attendez, et souffrez qu'en deux mots je finisse: Il souhaite un moment pour vous entretenir D'une affaire importante, et doit ici venir. Alb. Hé! quelle est-elle encore l'affaire qui l'oblige

A me vouloir parler?

Mas. Un grand secret, vous dis-je, Qu'il vient de découvrir en ce même moment, Et qui sans doute importe à tous deux grandement. Voilà mon ambassade.

Scène III

ALBERT

Alb. Oh! juste Ciel, je tremble! Car enfin nous avons peu de commerce ensemble. ALB. Ha! really, you take a great deal of trouble. Good-morning, with all my heart.

Mas. That cuts me off short. What a brusque old man!

ALB. Is that you again?

Mas. You did not hear, Monsieur.

Alb. Did you not wish me good-morning?

Mas. Yes.

ALB. Very well, then, I said good-morning to you in return.

Mas. Yes, but I have come with greetings from

Seigneur Polydore.

ALB. Oh! that is another matter. You are charged with a complimentary message to me from your master?

Mas. Yes.

ALB. I am much obliged to him. Go and tell him I wish him infinite happiness.

Mas. This man dislikes all ceremony. Monsieur, I have not finished giving you his message. has a favour he wishes to ask you immediately.

Alb. Ah well! When he wants me I am at his

service.

Mas. Wait, I shall finish in a couple of words; he desires a moment's talk with you about an important affair, and he will come and see you here.

ALB. Ah! What business can he want to discuss

with me?

Mas. It is a profound secret, I tell you, which he has only just found out, and which, indeed, deeply concerns you both. That is my message.

Scene III

ALBERT

ALB. Oh! just Heavens! how I tremble! for he and I have had few dealings with one another. Some

Quelque tempête va reverser mes desseins, Et ce secret sans doute est celui que je crains. L'espoir de l'intérêt m'a fait quelque infidèle, Et voilà sur ma vie une tache éternelle: Ma fourbe est découverte. Oh! que la vérité Se peut cacher longtemps avec difficulté, Et qu'il eût mieux valu pour moi, pour mon estime, Suivre les mouvements d'une peur légitime, Par qui je me suis vu tenté plus de vingt fois De rendre à Polydore un bien que je lui dois, De prévenir l'éclat où ce coup-ci m'expose, Et faire qu'en douceur passât toute la chose! Mais, hélas! c'en est fait, il n'est plus de saison; Et ce bien, par la fraude entré dans ma maison, N'en sera point tiré, que dans cette sortie Il n'entraîne du mien la meilleure partie.

Scène IV

ALBERT, POLYDORE

Pol. S'être ainsi marié sans qu'on en ait su rien! Puisse cette action se terminer à bien! Je ne sais qu'en attendre, et je crains fort du père Et la grande richesse et la juste colère. Mais je l'aperçois seul.

ALB. Dieu! Polydore vient!

Pol. Je tremble à l'aborder.

Alb. La crainte me retient.

Pol. Par où lui débuter?

Alb. Quel sera mon langage?

Pol. Son âme est toute émue.

Alb. Il change de visage. Pol. Je vois, seigneur Albert, au trouble de vos yeux,

Que vous savez déjà qui m'amène en ces lieux.

Alb. Hélas! oui.

Pol. La nouvelle a droit de vous surprendre, Et je n'eusse pas cru ce que je viens d'apprendre. storm is about to wreck my schemes; no doubt this secret is the one of all others I dread should be discovered. Some one has been seduced by money to betray me, and there will be a stain on my honour for the rest of my life. My knavery has been found out. Oh! how difficult it is to keep truth hid for long! How much better it would have been for me and for my reputation had I followed the promptings of a fearful conscience. which, scores of times, urged me to give up to Polydore the wealth that was his due; and so, by quietly settling the matter between us, I should have prevented the outcry which will now be raised against me! But alas! it is too late, the time has gone by; and this wealth, which came into my family by fraudulent means, will not only be lost, but will carry away with it the greater part of my own wealth too.

Scene IV

ALBERT, POLYDORE

Por. To think of being married in this way, without any one knowing anything at all about it! It can't end well. I do not know what to expect. I greatly fear the father's justifiable rage, especially as he is very wealthy. But here he is alone.

ALB. Oh! Heavens! Here comes Polydore!

Por. I tremble to meet him.

ALB. Fear draws me back. Pol. How shall I begin?

ALB. What shall I say?

Pol. He seems very much excited.

Alb. He changes colour.

Pol. I perceive, Monsieur Albert, by your looks, that you know already why I have come?

ALB. Yes, alas!

Pol. The news may well astonish you; I could hardly myself believe what I have just been told.

Alb. J'en dois rougir de honte et de confusion.

Por. Je trouve condamnable une telle action,

Et je ne prétends point excuser le coupable.

Alb. Dieu fait miséricorde au pécheur misérable.

Pol. C'est ce qui doit par vous être considéré.

Alb. Il faut être chrétien.

Pol. Il est très-assuré.

Alb. Grâce au nom de Dieu, grâce, ô seigneur Polydore!

Por. Eh! c'est moi qui de vous présentement l'implore.

Alb. Afin de l'obtenir je me jette à genoux.

Por. Je dois en cet état être plutôt que vous.

Alb. Prenez quelque pitié de ma triste aventure.

Por. Je suis le suppliant dans une telle injure.

ALB. Vous me fendez le cœur avec cette bonté.

Por. Vous me rendez confus de tant d'humilité.

Alb. Pardon, encore un coup.

Por. Hélas ; pardon vous-même.

Alb. J'ai de cette action une douleur extrême.

Pol. Et moi, j'en suis touché de même au dernier point.

ALB. J'ose vous convier qu'elle n'éclate point.

Por. Hélas! seigneur Albert, je ne veux autre chose.

Alb. Conservons mon honneur.

Pol. Hé! oui, je m'y dispose.

Alb. Quant au bien qu'il faudra, vous-même en résoudrez.

Pol. Je ne veux de vos biens que ce que vous voudrez: De tous ces intérêts je vous ferai le maître;

Et je suis trop content si vous le pouvez être.

Alb. Hé! quel homme de Dieu! quel excès de douceur!

Pol. Quelle douceur, vous-même: après un tel malheur! Ars. It is enough to make any one blush with shame and confusion.

Pol. I think such goings on are most culpable; I have no inclination to excuse the guilty party.

ALB. God is merciful to the miserable sinner.

Por. That is for you to bear in mind.

Alb. A man ought to act like a Christian.

Pol. Most certainly.

Alb. Pardon, in Heaven's name, pardon, Seigneur Polydore!

Pol. What! It is I who should implore forgiveness of you.

Alb. I go on my knees to crave it.

Pol. But it is I who ought rather to go on my knees to you.

ALB. Have a little pity on my great misfortune.

Por. After such an injury I am the suppliant.

ALB. Your generous magnanimity breaks my heart.

Por. You put me to shame with this humility.

Alb. Once more, forgive me. Pol. Alas! I beg forgiveness of you.

Alb. I am deeply sorry for this act.

Pol. And it grieves me to the heart.

Alb. I venture to implore you not to make it public.

Pol. Alas! Seigneur Albert, I am equally desirous to keep it quiet.

ALB. Think of my honour.

Por. Ah! indeed, I wish to do so.

ALB. As to the money needed, you yourself shall settle the amount.

Pol. I do not wish for more of your wealth than you are willing to give; you shall decide the money question entirely; I shall be only too content to leave it to you.

Alb. Oh! what a god-like man! What surpassing kindness!

Pol. The kindness is on your side, after such a blow!

Alb. Que puissiez-vous avoir toutes choses prospères! Pol. Le bon Dieu vous maintienne!

ALB. Embrassons-nous en frères.

Pol. J'y consens de grand cœur, et me réjouis fort Que tout soit terminé par un heureux accord.

Alb. J'en rends grâces au Ciel.

Pol. Il ne vous faut rien feindre: Votre ressentiment me donnait lieu de craindre; Et Lucile tombée en faute avec mon fils, Comme on vous voit puissant et de biens et d'amis...

Alb. Heu! que parlez-vous là de faute et de Lucile?

Pol. Soit, ne commençons point un discours inutile. Je veux bien que mons fils y trempe grandement; Même, si cela fait à votre allégement, J'avouerai qu'à lui seul en est toute la faute; Que votre fille avait une vertu trop haute Pour avoir jamais fait ce pas contre l'honneur, Sans l'incitation d'un méchant suborneur; Que le traître a séduit sa pudeur innocente, Et de votre conduite ainsi détruit l'attente. Puisque la chose est faite, et que selon mes vœux Un esprit de douceur nous met d'accord tous deux, Ne ramentevons rien, et réparons l'offense Par la solennité d'une heureuse alliance.

Alb. Oh! Dieu! quelle méprise! et qu'est-ce qu'il m'apprend?

Je rentre ici d'un trouble en un autre aussi grand. Dans ces divers transports je ne sais que répondre; Et si je dis un mot, j'ai peur de me confondre.

Pol. A quoi pensez-vous là, seigneur Albert?

Alb. A rien.

Remettons, je vous prie, à tantôt l'entretien : Un mal subit me prend, qui veut que je vous laisse. ALB. May you prosper in all things!

Pol. The good God keep you!

ALB. Let us embrace in brotherly love.

Pol. With all my heart. I am greatly delighted all has ended so happily.

ALB. I thank Heaven it has.

Pol. I do not like to deceive you in anything. I greatly feared your anger when you heard that Lucile and my son had compromised themselves; and since you are powerful in wealth and in friends...

ALB. Eh! What is this you say about Lucile having

done wrong?

Pol. Oh! do not let us trouble about that. I readily own that my son is much to blame; nay, if only I can satisfy you, I will admit that he alone is in fault; that your daughter's virtue was too great for her ever to have committed this dishonourable deed, unless urged thereto by an unprincipled seducer; that the scoundrel has betrayed her, taken advantage of her chaste innocence and disappointed all your expectations of her. But, since what is done is done, and we are both happily of one mind on the matter, let the offence be buried and forgotten, and let us put things right by an open and happy marriage.

ALB. Oh, Heavens! what a mistake I have committed! What does he say? I came here in one trouble only to fall into another as great. I did not know how to get out of these difficulties. I am afraid that if I say a single word I shall compromise

myself.

Pol. What is passing through your mind, Seigneur

Albert?

Alb. Oh, nothing. Let us postpone our interview for a little while. I am suddenly taken ill; I am afraid I must leave you.

SCÈNE V

POLVDORE

Por. Je lis dedans son âme et vois ce qui le presse. A quoi que sa raison l'eût déjà disposé, Son déplaisir n'est pas encore tout apaisé; L'image de l'affront lui revient, et sa fuite Tâche à me déguiser le trouble qui l'agite. Je prends part à sa honte, et son deuil m'attendrit. Il faut qu'un peu de temps remette son esprit: La douleur trop contrainte aisément se redouble. Voici mon jeune fou, d'où nous vient tout ce trouble.

SCÈNE VI

POLYDORE, VALÈRE

Por. Enfin, le beau mignon, vos bons déportements Troubleront les vieux jours d'un père à tous moments:

Tous les jours vous ferez de nouvelles merveilles, Et nous n'aurons jamais autre chose aux oreilles. VAL. Que fais-je tous les jours qui soit si criminel? En quoi mériter tant le courroux paternel?

Por. Je suis un étrange homme, et d'une humeur terrible.

D'accuser un enfant si sage et si paisible ! Las! il vit comme un saint, et dedans la maison Du matin jusqu'au soir il est en oraison. Dire qu'il pervertit l'ordre de la nature, Et fait du jour la nuit, oh! la grande imposture! Qu'il n'a considéré père ni parenté En vingt occasions, horrible fausseté! Que de fraîche mémoire un furtif hyménée A la fille d'Albert a joint sa destinée,

Scene V

POLYDORE

Pol. I can read his inmost soul, and I know what troubles him. Although his reason inclines him to make the best of it, yet his anger has not yet quite subsided; the remembrance of the insult comes back to him, and he tries to conceal his emotion by leaving me. I feel for him in his humiliation, and his sorrow is mine. It will be some time before he recovers his cheerfulness, for, if sorrow be pent up too much, it soon becomes more keen. Here comes my young fool of a son, the cause of all the trouble.

Scene VI

POLYDORE, VALÈRE

Pol. Well, my young spark, you don't give your old father much rest with your fine escapades. Every day you are up to some fresh antic; I seem never to hear of anything else.

Val. What am I doing now that is so very bad? In what way have I made you so angry, father.

Pol. I must indeed have a peculiar disposition, and possess a terrible temper to rail against so wise and well-behaved a son! Why! he lives like a saint, and stays at home from morning till night saying his prayers. It is a monstrous falsehood to say he reverses the order of nature by turning day into night! It is a wicked lie to say that, on scores of occasions, he considers neither his father nor his relatives! that quite recently he secretly allied himself to Albert's daughter, without any regard to the vital consequences that were bound to follow.

Sans craindre de la suite un désordre puissant : On le prend pour un autre, et le pauvre innocent Ne sait pas seulement ce que je lui veux dire! Ha! chien! que j'ai reçu du ciel pour mon martyre, Te croiras-tu toujours et ne pourrai-je pas Te voir être une fois sage avant mon trépas?

VAL. (seul). D'où peut venir ce coup? mon âme embarrassée

Ne voit que Mascarille où jeter sa pensée. Il ne sera pas homme à m'en faire un aveu : Il faut user d'adresse, et me contraindre un peu Dans ce juste courroux.

Scène VII

Mascarille, Valère

Mascarille, mon père, Que je viens de trouver, sait toute notre affaire. Mas. Il la sait?

Oni.

VAL. Mas. D'où diantre a-t-il pu la savoir? VAL. Je ne sais point sur qui ma conjecture asseoir: Mais enfin d'un succès cette affaire est suivie Dont j'ai tous les sujets d'avoir l'âme ravie. Il ne m'en a pas dit un mot qui fût fâcheux, Il excuse ma faute, il approuve mes feux; Et je voudrais savoir qui peut être capable D'avoir pu rendre ainsi son esprit si traitable. Je ne puis t'exprimer l'aise que j'en reçoi. Mas. Et que me diriez-vous, Monsieur, si c'était moi Qui vous eût procuré cette heureuse fortune?

VAL. Bon! bon! tu voudrais bien ici m'en donner

Mas. C'est moi, vous dis-je, moi dont le patron le

Et qui vous ai produit ce favorable effet.

VAL. Mais, là, sans te railler?

MAS. Que le diable m'emporte Si je fais raillerie, et s'il n'est de la sorte!

The poor innocent lad thinks I must be talking of some one else, and does not understand what I mean! Ah! you puppy! sent me by Heaven to punish me for my sins. Will you always go your own way? shall I never see you perform a decent act all my days?

Val. (alone). What does this mean? I am utterly perplexed. I cannot think of any one to consult, save Mascarille. And he is the last man to tell me the truth. I must not show him I am in a rage,

but must use cunning.

SCENE VII

Mascarille, Valère

VAL. I have just seen my father, Mascarille, and he knows the whole of our secret.

Mas. He knows that?

VAL. Yes.

Mas. Where the deuce could he have learnt it?

Val. I do not know who can have told him. But, as the affair has turned out, I have every cause to be delighted. He did not say one single angry word to me, but pardoned my fault, and is satisfied with my choice. I should much like to know who has made him so complaisant. I cannot tell you how relieved I was.

Mas. And what would you say, Monsieur, if you heard that it was I who brought about this good fortune? Val. Nonsense, you would not have me believe that?

Mas. But it was I, I tell you, who told the old gentleman, and so brought about a happy change in your fortune.

VAL. Really, are you in earnest?

Mas. The devil take me if I am not in earnest and if it is not as I say!

VAL. Et qu'il m'entraîne, moi, si tout présentement Tu n'en vas recevoir le juste payement!

Mas. Ha! Monsieur, qu'est-ce ci? Je défends la

surprise.

VAL. C'est la fidélité que tu m'avais promise? Sans ma feinte, jamais tu n'eusses avoué Le trait que j'ai bien cru que tu m'avais joué. Traître, de qui la langue à causer trop habile D'un père contre moi vient d'échauffer la bile, Qui me perds tout à fait, il faut, sans discourir.

Que tu meures.

MAS. Tout beau: mon âme, pour mourir. N'est pas en bon état. Daignez, je vous conjure, Attendre le succès qu'aura cette aventure. J'ai de fortes raisons qui m'ont fait révéler Un hymen que vous-même aviez peine à celer : C'était un coup d'État, et vous verrez l'issue Condamner la fureur que vous avez conçue. De quoi vous fâchez-vous? pourvu que vos souhaits Se trouvent par mes soins pleinement satisfaits, Et voient mettre à fin la contrainte où vous êtes?

VAL. Et si tous ces discours ne sont que des sor-

nettes?

Mas. Toujours serez-vous lors à temps pour me tuer. Mais enfin mes projets pourront s'effectuer: Dieu fera pour les siens; et content dans la suite, Vous me remercierez de ma rare conduite. VAL. Nous verrons. Mais Lucile . .

Alte! son père sort. MAS.

Scène VIII

Valère, Albert, Mascarille

Alb. Plus je reviens du trouble où j'ai donné d'abord, Plus je me sens piqué de ce discours étrange, Sur qui ma peur prenait un si dangereux change: Car Lucile soutient que c'est une chanson, Et m'a parlé d'un air à m'ôter tout soupcon. Ha! Monsieur, est-ce vous, de qui l'audace insigne Val. And may he take me if I do not this very instant give you your just reward.

Mas. Oh! Monsieur, what do you mean? I protest

against being attacked unawares.

Val. Is this the loyalty you promised me? Had I not taken you in, you would never have confessed to the trick I felt sure you had played me. You treacherous fellow, your glib tongue has set my father against me, roused his anger and completely ruined me. You shall die, without another word.

Mas. Not so fast: my soul is not in a fit state to die. I implore you to have the goodness to wait the upshot of this affair. I had strong reasons for revealing the alliance which you yourself could hardly hide. It was a bold stroke of policy; you will find in the end that your anger is unfounded. Why are you so angry, when through my endeavours you get all you want and are set free from the restraint of your present position?

VAL. And what if all this talk is simply rubbish?

Mas. Why, then will be the time to slay me; but, meanwhile, my plans may succeed; Heaven helps its own; you will be satisfied in the long run and thank me for my clever management.

VAL. We shall see. But Lucile . . . MAS. Stop! Here comes her father.

Scene VIII

VALÈRE, ALBERT, MASCARILLE

Alb. The more I get back my composure after that sudden shock, the more I am puzzled by his strange talk, which my fears made me take in such a different sense. But Lucile declares it is all rubbish and has spoken to me in a way that has quite put an end to all my suspicions. Ah! Mon-

Met en jeu mon honneur, et fait ce conte indigne?

Mas. Seigneur Albert, prenez un ton un peu plus doux,

Et contre votre gendre ayez moins de courroux.

Alb. Comment gendre, coquin? Tu portes bien la mine

De pousser les ressorts d'une telle machine, Et d'en avoir été le premier inventeur. Mas. Je ne vois ici rien à vous mettre en fureur.

Alb. Trouves-tu beau, dis-moi, de diffamer ma fille, Et faire un tel scandale à toute une famille?

Mas. Le voilà prêt de faire en tout vos volontés.

Alb. Que voudrais-je sinon qu'il dit des vérités?

Si quelque intention le pressait pour Lucile,
La recherche en pouvait être honnête et civile:
Il fallait l'attaquer du côté du devoir,
Il fallait de son père implorer le pouvoir,
Et non pas recourir à cette lâche feinte,
Qui porte à la pudeur une sensible atteinte.

Mas. Quoi? Lucile n'est pas sous des liens secrets
A mon maître?

Alb. Non, traître, et n'y sera jamais.

Mas. Tout doux! Et s'il est vrai que ce soit chose faite,

Voulez-vous l'approuver, cette chaîne secrète?
Alb. Et s'il est constant, toi, que cela ne soit pas,
Veux-tu te voir casser les jambes et les bras?
VAL. Monsieur, il est aisé de vous faire paraître
Qu'il dit vrai.

Alb. Bon! voilà l'autre encor, digne maître D'un semblable valet! Oh! les menteurs hardis! Mas. D'homme d'honneur, il est ainsi que je le dis.

Val. Quel serait notre but de vous en faire accroire?
Alb. Ils s'entendent tous deux comme larrons en foire.

sieur. is that you who have had the egregious impudence to trifle with my honourable name and make up this foul tale?

Mas. Seigneur Albert, moderate your language somewhat, and do not be so angry with your son-in-law.

ALB. What do you mean by son-in-law, scoundrel? You put on airs as though you were the mainspring of this intrigue and its first inventor.

Mas. I do not see what there is to put you in such a fury.

ALB. Do you think it an excellent thing, I say, to take away my daughter's good name and bring a scandal of this kind upon a whole family?

Mas. He is ready to do everything you wish.

Alb. I want nothing from him but that he should tell the truth. If he were disposed towards Lucile, he should have courted her openly and honourably; he should have acted properly, and approached her father to ask permission, and not have stooped to a cowardly intrigue which offends all sense of decency.

Mas. What? Is not Lucile secretly allied to my master?

Alb. No, villain, nor will she ever be.

Mas. Not so fast! But if it be true that she is, will you consent to confirm the bonds they have made?

ALB. And if it be certain that she is not, will you consent to be thrashed black and blue?

VAL. It is easy, Monsieur, to prove to you that he is telling the truth.

ALB. Good! there is the other one: like master like man! Oh! you brazen-faced liars!

Mas. On my faith as a man of honour, it is as I tell vou.

VAL. What object could we have in deceiving you?

ALB. They play into one another's hands like thieves at a fair.

Mas. Mais venons à la preuve, et sans nous quereller, Faites sortir Lucile et la laissez parler.

Alb. Et si le démenti par elle vous en reste?

Mas. Elle n'en fera rien, Monsieur, je vous proteste.

Promettez à leurs vœux votre consentement,

Et je veux m'exposer au plus dur châtiment,

Si de sa propre bouche elle ne vous confesse

Et la foi qui l'engage et l'ardeur qui la presse.

Alb. Il faut voir cette affaire.

Mas.
Alb., Allez, tout ira bien.

Alb., Holà! Lucile, un mot.

Val., Je crains . . .

Mas.
Ne craignez rien.

SCÈNE IX

Valère, Albert, Mascarille, Lucile

Mas. Seigneur Albert, au moins, silence. Enfin, Madame,

Toute chose conspire au bonheur de votre âme, Et Monsieur votre père, averti de vos feux, Vous laisse votre époux et confirme vos vœux, Pourvu que bannissant toutes craintes frivoles, Deux mots de votre aveu confirment nos paroles. Luc. Que me vient donc conter ce coquin assuré?

Mas. Bon! me voilà déjà d'un beau titre honoré.

Luc. Sachons un peu, Monsieur, quelle belle saillie Fait ce conte galand qu'aujourd'hui l'on publie.

Val. Pardon, charmant objet, un valet a parlé, Et j'ai vu malgré moi notre hymen révélé.

Luc. Notre hymen?

Var. On sait tout, adorable Lucile.

Et vouloir déguiser est un soin inutile.

Mas. But let us produce the proof, without arguing. Send for Lucile, and hear what she has to say.

Alb. But suppose she prove you liars.

Mas. I am certain she will not do anything of the kind, Monsieur. Promise your consent to their alliance and I will give myself up for the soundest beating you like, if she does not confess to you with her own lips that she is bound to Valère and is passionately in love with him.

ALB. We must look into this matter.

MAS. Come, Monsieur, all will be well.

ALB. Here, Lucile, I want to speak to you.

VAL. I fear . . .

Mas. Do not fear anything.

Scene IX

Valère, Albert, Mascarille, Lucile

Mas. Seigneur Albert, please keep silence for a little while. Now, Madam, everything tends to make you happy. Your father, who knows of your attachment, is willing to give you to your husband and will sanction your union, provided that, casting aside all foolish fears, you confirm in a few words what we have told him.

Luc. What story has this impudent rascal concocted

Mas. Good, I am honoured by the dignity of a title.

Luc. Pray tell me, Monsieur, what fine wit has devised this pretty story and spread it abroad everywhere?

Val. Pardon me, beloved one, my lackey has let it out, and our union is known in spite of all I could do.

Luc. Our union?

Val. All is known, sweet Lucile, and it is useless to my to hide it.

Luc. Quoi? l'ardeur de mes feux vous a fait mon époux?

Val. C'est un bien qui me doit faire mille jaloux;
Mais j'impute bien moins ce bonheur de ma flamme
A l'ardeur de vos feux qu'aux bontés de votre âme.
Je sais que vous avez sujet de vous fâcher,
Que c'était un secret que vous vouliez cacher;
Et j'ai de mes transports forcé la violence
A ne point violer votre expresse défense;
Mais . . .

Mas. Hé bien! oui, c'est moi: le grand mal que voilà!

Luc. Est-il une imposture égale à celle-là? Vous l'osez soutenir en ma présence même, Et pensez m'obtenir par ce beau stratagème? Oh! le plaisant amant, dont la galante ardeur Veut blesser mon honneur au défaut de mon cœur, Et que mon père, ému de l'éclat d'un sot conte, Paye avec mon hymen qui me couvre de honte! Quand tout contribuerait à votre passion : Mon père, les destins, mon inclination, On me verrait combattre, en ma juste colère, Mon inclination, les destins et mon père, Perdre même le jour, avant que de m'unir A qui par ce moyen aurait cru m'obtenir. Allez; et si mon sexe, avecque bienséance, Se pouvait emporter à quelque violence, Je vous apprendrais bien à me traiter ainsi. VAL. C'en est fait, son courroux ne peut être adouci.

Val. C'en est fait, son courroux ne peut être adouci.
Mas. Laissez-moi lui parler. Eh! Madame, de grâce,
A quoi bon maintenant toute cette grimace?
Quelle est votre pensée? et quel bourru transport
Contre vos propres vœux vous fait raidir si fort?
Si Monsieur votre père était homme farouche,
Passe; mais il permet que la raison le touche,
Et lui-même m'a dit qu'une confession
Vous va tout obtenir de son affection.
Vous sentez, je crois bien, quelque petite honte
A faire un libre aveu de l'amour qui vous dompte;
Mais s'il vous a fait perdre un peu de liberté,

Luc. What? has the warmth of my love made you my husband?

Val. It is a happy result and one which will make a thousand others jealous. But I ascribe the success of my wooing not so much to the warmth of your passion as to your kind heart. I know you have grounds for being angry, as you wished to keep our act secret, and I have had to restrain the expression of my passion, in order not to infringe your definite commands; but . . .

Mas. Well, then, yes, it was I. Where was the harm?

Luc. Was there ever such a falsehood uttered? You dare to maintain this story in my very presence, in the hope of gaining my hand by a monstrous trick? Oh! what a worthy lover, whose gallant passion would defame my reputation if he could not win my heart! And would have my father overwhelmed by the scandal of this base tale, purchasing silence by forcing me into a marriage which would cover me with shame! Though everything should favour your suit-my father, fate, my own inclination, I would struggle to the last in righteous indignation against them all, and die rather than join myself to one who sought to gain me by such means. Begone! If my sex would allow me to make use of violent measures I would soon teach you to treat me differently.

Val. It is all up with us; we cannot calm her anger. Mas. Let me talk to her. Pray, Madam, what is the good of all this masquerading now? What can you be thinking of? what odd fancy makes you fight so hard against your own happiness? If your father were a stern man, it would be different, but he listens to common sense and he himself told me that he loves you so much he would grant you all you want if you would but confess. I know you must feel a little ashamed to make an open confession that you submitted to your lover; but even if you did lose control over yourself to a slight

Par un bon mariage on voit tout rajusté; Et quoi que l'on reproche au feu qui vous consomme,

Le mal n'est pas si grand, que de tuer un homme. On sait que la chair est fragile quelquefois, Et qu'une fille enfin n'est ni caillou ni bois. Vous n'avez pas été sans doute la première,

Et vous ne serez pas, que je crois, la dernière. Luc. Quoi? vous pouvez ouïr ces discours effrontés,

Et vous ne dites mot à ces indignités? ALB. Que veux-tu que je die? Une telle aventure

Me met tout hors de moi. MAS. Madame, je vous jure

Que déjà vous devriez avoir tout confessé.

Luc. Et quoi donc confesser? Quoi? Ce qui s'est passé Entre mon maître et vous : la belle raillerie! Luc. Et que s'est-il passé, monstre d'effronterie,

Entre ton maître et moi?

Vous devez, que je croi, En savoir un peu plus de nouvelles que moi, Et pour vous cette nuit fut trop douce, pour croire Que vous puissiez si vite en perdre la mémoire. Luc. C'est trop souffrir, mon père, un impudent

valet.

Scène X

Valère, Mascarille, Albert

Mas. Je crois qu'elle me vient de donner un soufflet. Alb. Va, coquin, scélérat, sa main vient sur ta joue De faire une action dont son père la loue.

Mas. Et nonobstant cela, qu'un diable en cet instant M'emporte, si j'ai dit rien que de très-constant!

ALB. Et nonobstant cela, qu'on me coupe une oreille, Si tu portes fort loin une audace pareille!

Mas. Voulez-vous deux témoins qui me justifieront?

extent, all will be put right by a proper marriage. If people do blame you for your ardent love, it is not such a crime after all as though you had committed a murder. We all know that the flesh is sometimes frail, and that even a virgin is made of flesh and blood. You are certainly not the first and I am sure you will not be the last.

Luc. How can you listen to this impudent talk and make no answer to his insults?

ALB. What can I say? I am utterly confounded by what has happened.

Mas. You ought to have confessed everything before now, Madam.

Luc. But what have I to confess?

Mas. What? Why, what passed between my master and you. A pretty piece of work, truly.

Luc. And what did pass between your master and

me, you impertinent rascal?

Mas. I think you ought to know a little more about that than I; you passed the night far too pleasantly to make us believe you have forgotten it so quickly.

Luc. Father, this is too much to bear from an

impudent lackey.

Scene X

VALÈRE, MASCARILLE, ALBERT

Mas. I verily believe she slapped my face.

Alb. Begone, you rogue, you scoundrel; her father approves of her action in slapping your face.

Mas. Nevertheless, may the devil take me this instant if I said aught but the bare truth!

ALB. Nevertheless, may my ears be rung off if you repeat this story again!

Mas. Will you let me bring two witnesses to attest the truth of what I say?

Alb. Veux-tu deux de mes gens qui te bâtonneront?

Mas. Leur rapport doit au mien donner toute créance.

Alb. Leurs bras peuvent du mien réparer l'impuissance. Mas. Je vous dis que Lucile agit par honte ainsi.

Alb. Je te dis que j'aurai raison de tout ceci.

Mas. Connaissez-vous Ormin, ce gros notaire habile?

Alb. Connais-tu bien Grimpant, le bourreau de la ville?

MAS. Et Simon le tailleur, jadis si recherché?
ALB. Et la potence mise au milieu du marché?

Mas. Vous verrez confirmer par eux cet hyménée.

Alb. Tu verras achever par eux ta destinée.

Mas. Ce sont eux qu'ils ont pris pour témoins de leur foi.

Alb. Ce sont eux qui dans peu me vengeront de toi.

Mas. Et ces yeux les ont vus s'entre-donner parole. Alb. Et ces yeux te verront faire la capriole.

Mas. Et pour signe, Lucile avait un voile noir.
ALB. Et pour signe, ton front nous le fait assez voir.

Mas. Oh! l'obstiné vieillard!

Alb. Oh! le fourbe damnable! Va, rends grâce à mes ans qui me font incapable De punir sur-le-champ l'affront que tu me fais: Tu n'en perds que l'attente, et je te le promets...

Scène XI

Valère, Mascarille

Val. Hé bien! ce beau succès que tu devais produire . . .

Alb. Would you like me to send for two of my grooms to give you a good flogging?

Mas Their testimony will prove that I spoke the

Mas. Their testimony will prove that I spoke the truth.

ALB. Their arms will make up for my weakness.

Mas. I tell you Lucile acted thus because she was ashamed.

Alb. I tell you I will let the law pay you for all this.

Mas. Do you know Ormin, the fat, clever notary?
Alb. Do you know Grimpant, the town executioner?

Mas. And Simon, who was once a fashionable tailor?

ALB. And the gallows in the centre of the marketplace?

Mas. You will see that they will tell you what took place.

Alb. You will see that they will put an end to your life.

Mas. It was they who witnessed them plight their troth.

Alb. It will be they who will wreak my vengeance on you very soon.

Mas. They saw them pledge each other.

Alb. They shall see you dance with a rope round your neck.

Mas. And for a token Lucile wore a black veil.

ALB. And also for token you have a hanging face.

Mas. Oh! obstinate old man!

Alb. Oh! damnable scoundrel! Begone and thank my years that prevent me from punishing you here and now for the insult you have put on me. But you shall not lose anything by waiting, that I promise you.

Scene XI

Valère, Mascarille

Val. Well! where is this successful result you were to bring about? . . .

Mas. J'entends à demi-mot ce que vous voulez dire : Tout s'arme contre moi ; pour moi de tous côtés Je vois coups de bâton et gibets apprêtés. Aussi, pour être en paix dans ce désordre extrême, Je me vais d'un rocher précipiter moi-meme, Si dans le désespoir dont mon cœur est outré, Je puis en rencontrer d'assez haut à mon gré. Adieu, Monsieur.

Non, non; ta fuite est superflue: Si tu meurs, je prétends que ce soit à ma vue.

Mas. Je ne saurais mourir quand je suis regardé, Et mon trépas ainsi se verrait retardé.

Val. Suis-moi, traître, suis-moi: mon amour en furie

Te fera voir si c'est matière à raillerie.

Mas. Malheureux Mascarille! à quels maux aujourd'hui

Te vois-tu condammé pour le péché d'autrui!

FIN DII TROISIÈME ACTE

ACTE IV

Scène I

ASCAGNE, FROSINE

FRo. L'aventure est fâcheuse.

Ah! ma chère Frosine, As. Le sort absolument a conclu ma ruine. Cette affaire, venue au point où la voilà, N'est pas assurément pour en demeurer là; Il faut qu'elle passe outre; et Lucile et Valère, Surpris des nouveautés d'un semblable mystère, Voudront chercher un jour dans ces obscurités

Mas. I know what you mean before you speak: everything turns against me; I see rods in pickle and gallows getting ready for me on all sides. Therefore, the only way to be at peace in the midst of utter chaos is to go and throw myself over a precipice, if in the abyss of my misery I can find one high enough to my taste. Farewell, Monsieur.

Var. No, no, it is useless to try flight; if you are to die I insist that it shall take place in my presence.

Mas. I could not die with anybody watching me, so

my death would only be delayed.

Val. Follow me, deceiver, follow me; you shall soon see by my anger that it is no joking matter to thwart my passion.

Mas. Unlucky Mascarille! What a peck of troubles

is thy lot through the crimes of others!

END OF THE THIRD ACT

ACT IV

Scene I

ASCAGNE, FROSINE

FRO. What a wretched mishap!

As. Ah! my dear Frosine, fate has determined my utter ruin. This affair has now gone so far that it certainly will not stop where it is, but will go on to the end; and Lucile and Valère, surprised at such mysterious events, will try to bring the secret to light, and one day all my plans will come to naught. For whether Albert be aware of the

Par qui tous mes projets se verront avortés. Car enfin, soit qu'Albert ait part au stratagème, Ou qu'avec tout le monde on l'ait trompé luimême,

S'il arrive une fois que mon sort éclairci Mette ailleurs tout le bien dont le sien a grossi, Jugez s'il aura lieu de souffrir ma présence: Son intérêt détruit me laisse à ma naissance; C'est fait de sa tendresse; et quelque sentiment Où pour ma fourbe alors pût être mon amant, Voudra-t-il avouer pour épouse une fille Qu'il verra sans appui de biens et de famille? Fro. Je trouve que c'est là raisonné comme il faut; Mais ces réflexions devaient venir plus tôt.

Qui vous a jusqu'ici caché cette lumière? Il ne fallait pas être une grande sorcière Pour voir, dès le moment de vos desseins pour lui, Tout ce que votre esprit ne voit que d'aujourd'hui: L'action le disait, et dès que je l'ai sue, Je n'en ai prévu guère une meilleure issue.

As. Que dois-je faire enfin? Mon trouble est sans

pareil.

Mettez-vous en ma place, et me donnez conseil.

Fro. Ce doit être à vous-même, en prenant votre place.

A me donner conseil dessus cette disgrâce; Car je suis maintenant vous, et vous êtes moi. Conseillez-moi, Frosine: au point où je me voi, Quel remède trouver? Dites, je vous en prie.

As. Hélas! ne traitez point ceci de raillerie;
C'est prendre peu de part à mes cuisants ennuis
Que de rire et de voir les termes où j'en suis.
Fro. Non vraiment, tout de bon, votre ennui m'est sensible.

Et pour vous en tirer je ferais mon possible; Mais que puis-je, après tout? Je vois fort peu de jour

A tourner cette affaire au gré de votre amour.

As. Si rien ne peut m'aider, il faut donc que je meure.

deception or is himself deceived in the way every one else is, if it should happen that my real state be found out, and all the wealth which he has become possessed of be restored to others, will he then endure me here any longer? I shall have become worthless to him, and he will let me fall back into my natural condition; there will be an end to his affection for me; and whatever my lover may think of my deceit, is he likely to own as his wife a girl bereft of both fortune and family?

Fro. Your reasoning is quite sound, but these thoughts should have come sooner. What prevented you from seeing so clearly before? There was no need to be a clever sorceress to see when you first laid snares for him that all would happen which your wits have never discovered until to-day. The deed spoke for itself, and directly I heard about it I saw that nothing good would come of it.

As. But what can I do? I am distracted with my trouble. Put yourself in my place and tell me

what to do.

Fro. If I were to put myself in your place it would be you who should give me advice in this scrape; for I should then be you and you me. Advise me, Frosine: what remedy can I find out of my plight? Tell me, I implore you.

As. Alas! Do not treat the matter as a jest; you show little sympathy in my terrible anguish, to

laugh when you see how I am placed.

Fro. Nay, indeed, I do feel for you, and I will do everything in my power to help you. But, when all is said, what can I do? I see very little prospect of turning this affair so as to bring you good luck.

As. If there is no way out of my trouble I must die.

FRO. Ha! pour cela toujours il est assez bonne heure:

La mort est un remède à trouver quand on veut, Et l'on s'en doit servir le plus tard que l'on peut.

As. Non, non, Frosine, non; si vos conseils propices Ne conduisent mon sort parmi ces précipices,

Je m'abandonne toute aux traits du désespoir. Fro. Savez-vous ma pensée? Il faut que j'aille voir La . . . Mais Eraste vient, qui pourrait nous distraire.

Nous pourrons en marchant parler de cette affaire : Allons, retirons-nous.

Scène II

ÉRASTE, GROS-RENÉ

Éĸ. Encore rebuté? GR.-R. Jamais ambassadeur ne fut moins écouté: A peine ai-je voulu lui porter la nouvelle Du moment d'entretien que vous souhaitiez d'elle, Qu'elle m'a répondu, tenant son quant-à-moi: 'Va, va, je fais état de lui comme de toi; Dis-lui qu'il se promène'; et sur ce beau langage, Pour suivre son chemin m'a tourné le visage; Et Marinette aussi, d'un dédaigneux museau Lâchant un 'Laisse-nous, beau valet de carreau,' M'a planté là comme elle : et mon sort et le vôtre N'ont rien à se pouvoir reprocher l'un à l'autre. Er. L'ingrate! recevoir avec tant de fierté Le prompt retour d'un cœur justement emporté! Quoi? le premier transport d'un amour qu'on abuse Sous tant de vraisemblance est indigne d'excuse? Et ma plus vive ardeur, en ce moment fatal, Devait être insensible au bonheur d'un rival? Tout autre n'eût pas fait même chose en ma place, Et se fût moins laissé surprendre à tant d'audace? De mes justes soupcons suis-je sorti trop tard?

Je n'ai point attendu de serments de sa part;

Et lorsque tout le monde encor ne sait qu'en croire, Ce cœur impatient lui rend toute sa gloire, Il cherche à s'excuser; et le sien voit si peu Dans ce profond respect la grandeur de mon feu! Loin d'assurer une âme, et lui fournir des armes Contre ce qu'un rival lui veut donner d'alarmes, L'ingrate m'abandonne à mon jaloux transport, Et rejette de moi message, écrit, abord ! Ha! sans doute, un amour a peu de violence, Qu'est capable d'éteindre une si faible offense; Et ce dépit si prompt à s'armer de rigueur Découvre assez pour moi tout le fond de son cœur, Et de quel prix doit être à présent à mon âme Tout ce dont son caprice a pu flatter ma flamme. Non, je ne prétends plus demeurer engagé Pour un cœur où je vois le peu de part que j'ai; Et puisque l'on témoigne une froideur extrême A conserver les gens, je veux faire de même.

GR.-R. Et moi de mêmeaussi: soyons tous deux fâchés, Et mettons notre amour au rang des vieux péchés. Il faut apprendre à vivre à ce sexe volage, Et lui faire sentir que l'on a du courage. Qui souffre ses mépris les veut bien recevoir. Si nous avions l'esprit de nous faire valoir, Les femmes n'auraient pas la parole si haute. Oh! qu'elles nous sont bien fières par notre faute! Je veux être pendu, si nous ne les verrions Sauter à notre cou plus que nous ne voudrions, Sans tous ces vils devoirs dont la plupart des hommes Les gâtent tous les jours dans le siècle où nous sommes.

Én. Pour moi, sur toute chose, un mépris me surprend;

Et pour punir le sien par un autre aussi grand, Je veux mettre en mon cœur une nouvelle flamme. Gr.-R. Et moi, je ne veux plus m'embarrasser de femme: I had just cause? I have not waited for protestations from her; even while the rest of the world is still at a loss what to think of it, my large heart tries to find excuses for her and to restore her reputation; but she is wilfully blind to this evidence of my profound regard for her and of the depth of my passion. Instead of reassuring me and providing me with weapons against a rival who wishes to confound me, the ungrateful woman leaves me to the torments of jealousy, and refuses to accept my messages and notes; she will not even see me. Ah! surely a passion must be very feeble which can be extinguished by such a frivolous offence; her scornful anger, up in arms at the least excuse, reveals to me only too well the real state of her heart, and at what price I should now value those caprices of hers which fanned my passion. No, I will not seek any longer to be the slave of a heart that thinks so little of me as this; and, since she is thus coldly indifferent whether she retains her lover or not, I will be the same.

GR.-R. And so will I. We will both be angry and put away our love affairs among the rest of our past sins. We must teach these fickle women a lesson and show them we are not devoid of spirit. who will endure their contempt can have all he wants of it. If we had the sense to avoid making ourselves cheap, women would not think so much of themselves. Oh! it is our fault they became so uppish! May I be hanged if we should not soon have them falling on our necks more often than we liked, were it not for the servile attentions most men pay them, utterly spoiling them.

Én. Well, nothing annoys me more than contempt, and, in order to punish her by a contempt equally great, I mean to pay my attentions to some other woman.

GR.-R. And I will never trouble myself about women

A toutes je renonce, et crois, en bonne foi, Que vous feriez fort bien de faire comme moi. Car, voyez-vous, la femme est, comme on dit, mon maître.

Un certain animal difficile à connaître. Et de qui la nature est fort encline au mal; Et comme un animal est toujours animal, Et ne sera jamais qu'animal, quand sa vie Durerait cent mille ans, aussi, sans repartie, La femme est toujours femme, et jamais ne sera Que femme, tant qu'entier le monde durera ; D'où vient qu'un certain Grec dit que sa tête passe Pour un sable mouvant; car, goûtez bien, de grâce, Ce raisonnement-ci, lequel est des plus forts : Ainsi que la tête est comme le chef du corps. Et que le corps sans chef est pire qu'une bête : Si le chef n'est pas bien d'accord avec la tête, Que tout ne soit pas bien réglé par le compas, Nous voyons arriver de certains embarras ; La partie brutale alors veut prendre empire Dessus la sensitive, et l'on voit que l'un tire A dia, l'autre à hurhaut ; l'un demande du mou. L'autre du dur; enfin tout va sans savoir où: Pour montrer qu'ici-bas, ainsi qu'on l'interprète. La tête d'une femme est comme la girouette Au haut d'une maison, qui tourne au premier vent. C'est pourquoi le cousin Aristote souvent La compare à la mer; d'où vient qu'on dit qu'au monde

On ne peut rien trouver de si stable que l'onde. Or, par comparaison (car la comparaison Nous fait distinctement comprendre une raison, Et nous aimons bien mieux, nous autres gens d'étude.

Une comparaison qu'une similitude), Par comparaison donc, mon maître, s'il vous plaît, Comme on voit que la mer, quand l'orage s'accroît, Vient à se courroucer; le vent souffie et ravage, Les flots contre les flots font un remu-ménage Horrible; et le vaisseau, malgré le nautonier, again: I renounce them all, and I am sure you would be much wiser were you to follow my example. For, as people say, master, a woman is a kind of animal difficult to understand and strongly inclined by nature to evil ways; and, as an animal is always an animal, and will never be anything but an animal, though it live for a hundred thousand years, so, it goes without saying that a woman is always a woman, and will never be anvthing else but a woman, so long as the world shall last. And that was why a certain Greek said that her head was like a quicksand; for-pray take careful note of this reasoning, since it is of the utmost importance—as the head is the ruler of the body. and as the body without a ruler is worse than a beast, if the ruler be not on good terms with the head, and if everything be not as well regulated as though guided by a compass, confusion follows: the animal part then tries to get the upper hand of the rational, and one pulls the rein to the left and the other to the right; one sings out for something soft, and the other for something hard; in fact, no one knows 'where 'e are.' Or, to put it another way, a woman's head is like a weather-cock on a house-top, which veers about with every breeze. That was why cousin Aristotle constantly compared her to the sea; from which we get the common saving that there is nothing in the world so stable as the ocean. Now, by comparison (for comparison enables us to understand an argument clearly, and we learned men very much prefer a comparison to a similitude), by comparison then, dear master, by your leave, just as we see that when a storm begins to blow and the sea rises, the wind roars and rages, billows clash against billows with a fine uproar, and, in spite of the navigator, the ship goes sometimes down into the cellar, and sometimes up into the attic; so, when a woman gets a fancy into her head, there is a tempest in the form of a squall, which rivals the other as kind of . . . windbag: Va tantôt à la cave, et tantôt au grenier:
Ainsi, quand une femme a sa tête fantasque,
On voit une tempête en forme de bourrasque,
Qui veut compétiter par de certains . . . propos
Et lors un . . . certain vent, qui par . . . de
certains flots.

De . . . certaine façon, ainsi qu'un banc de sable . . .

Quand . . . Les femmes enfin ne valent pas le diable.

Ér. C'est fort bien raisonner.

Gr.-R. Assez bien, Dieu merci. Mais je les vois, Monsieur, qui passent par ici.

Tenez-vous ferme, au moins.

Ér. Ne te mets pas en peine. Gr.-R. J'ai bien peur que ses yeux resserrent votre chaîne.

Scène III

Éraste, Lucile, Marinette, Gros-René

Mar. Je l'aperçois encor ; mais ne vous rendez point. Luc. Ne me soupçonne pas d'être faible à ce point. Mar. Il vient à nous.

ER. Non, non, ne croyez pas, Madame, Que je revienne encor vous parler de ma flamme. C'en est fait; je me veux guérir, et connais bien Ce que de votre cœur a possédé le mien. Un courroux si constant pour l'ombre d'une offense M'a trop bien éclaire de votre indifférence, Et je dois vous montrer que les traits du mépris Sont sensibles surtout aux généreux esprits. Je l'avouerai, mes yeux observaient dans les vôtres Des charmes qu'ils n'ont point trouvés dans tous les autres,

Et le ravissement où j'étais de mes fers Les aurait préférés à des sceptres offerts: Oui, mon amour pour vous, sans doute, était extrême: and then a . . . kind of wind, which by . . . kind of breaker, in . . . kind of way, just as a sandbank . . . when . . . Women in short are the very devil.

Ér. Admirably well reasoned.

GR. R. I thought it was not so bad. But here they come. Monsieur, be sure vou stand firm.

Én. Have no fear on that score.

GR.-R. I am much afraid her eyes will enslave you again.

SCENE III

ÉRASTE, LUCILE, MARINETTE, GROS-RENÉ

MAR. He is still there; do not give in.

Luc. Do not think I am so weak. MAR. He is coming towards us.

Ér. No, no, Madam, do not suppose I have come again to speak to you of love. That is all over; I have determined to cure myself. I realise now how little you care for me. To ride the high horse for such a length of time and for such a trifling offence showed me only too clearly your indifference, and I would have you know that contempt, more than anything else, wounds a loving heart. I admit that I saw charms in you I had not found in any one else; and so great was my infatuation that I preferred my chains as others prefer offered sceptres. Yes, my love for you was, indeed, great; I lived only for you; and I will even confess that though I was grossly insulted, I shall still have some difficulty in freeing myself. It may be, in Je vivais tout en vous; et, je l'avouerai même,
Peut-être qu'après tout j'aurai, quoiqu'outragé,
Assez de peine encore à m'en voir dégagé:
Possible que, malgré la cure qu'elle essaie,
Mon âme saignera longtemps de cette plaie,
Et qu'affranchi d'un joug qui faisait tout mon bien,
It qu'ar se résoudre à n'aimer jamais rien;
Mais enfin il n'importe, et puisque votre haine
Chasse un cœur tant de fois que l'amour vous
ramène,

C'est la dernière ici des importunités Que vous aurez jamais de mes vœux rebutés. Luc. Vous pouvez faire aux miens la grâce toute entière.

Monsieur, et m'épargner encor cette dernière.
Ér. Hé bien, Madame, hé bien, ils seront satisfaits!
Je romps avecque vous, et j'y romps pour jamais,
Puisque vous le voulez: que je perde la vie
Lorsque de vous parler je reprendrai l'envie!
Luc. Tant mieux, c'est m'obliger.
Ér.
Non, non, n'ayez pas peur

Que je fausse parole: eussé-je un faible cœur Jusques à n'en pouvoir effacer votre image, Croyez que vous n'aurez jamais cet avantage De me voir revenir.

Luc. Ce serait bien en vain.

Ér. Moi-même de cent coups je percerais mon sein, Si j'avais jamais fait cette bassesse insigne, De vous revoir après ce traitement indigne. Luc. Soit, n'en parlons donc plus. Ér. Oui, oui, n'en parlons plus; Et pour trancher ici tous propos superflus,

Et pour trancher ici tous propos superflus, Et vous donner, ingrate, une preuve certaine Que je veux, sans retour, sortir de votre chaîne, Je ne veux rien garder qui puisse retracer Ce que de mon esprit il me faut effacer. Voici votre portrait: il présente à la vue Cent charmes merveilleux dont vous êtes pourvue; Mais il cache sous eux cent défauts aussi grands, spite of the cure I am trying, that my heart will bleed for long from this wound. And, when it is freed from a yoke which I took delight in wearing, I shall make up my mind never to love again. But this does not matter; since you haughtily repulse my love as often as it returns to you, this is the last time you shall ever be annoyed by the importunities of a rejected suit.

Luc. You might have made the favour quite complete, Monsieur, by sparing me this final meeting.

Ér. Very well, Madam, very well, your wishes shall be satisfied! I now break with you, and I break with you for ever, since you desire it. May I die if ever I want to speak to you again!

Luc. So much the better, that will just suit me.

Ér. No, no, you need not be afraid I shall break my word. Even though my heart were so weak as not to be able to efface your image, you may be sure you shall never have the pleasure of seeing me again.

Luc. It would be quite in vain for you to come back

to me.

Ér. I would stab myself to the heart a hundred times rather than commit such a humiliating act as to see

you again after this insolent treatment.

Luc. Be it so; do not let us talk any further about it. Er. By all means, do not let us say any more about it; and to make an end at once of all needless speeches, and to give you, you ungrateful woman, a sure proof that I mean to throw off your thraldom for ever, I will not keep anything that could remind me of what I ought to forget. Here is your portrait; it presents to the observer the thousand exquisite charms with which you are endowed, but it conceals under them a hundred defects as great

Et c'est un imposteur enfin que je vous rends.

GR.-R. Bon.

Luc. Et moi, pour vous suivre au dessein de tout rendre.

Voilà le diamant que vous m'aviez fait prendre.

Mar. Fort bien.

ÉR. Il est à vous encor ce bracelet.

Luc. Et cette agate à vous, qu'on fit mettre en cachet. Ér. (lit). 'Vous m'aimez d'une amour extrême,

Éraste, et de mon cœur voulez être éclairci :

Si je n'aime Éraste de même,

Au moins aimé-je fort qu'Éraste m'aime ainsi.

ÉR. (continue). Vous m'assuriez par là d'agréer mon service?

C'est une fausseté digne de ce supplice.

Luc. (lit). 'J'ignore le destin de mon amour ardente,

Et jusqu'à quand je souffrirai;

'Mais je sais, ô beauté charmante, 'Que toujours je vous aimerai.

ÉBASTE.

(Elle continue). Voilà qui m'assuraità jamais de vos feux? Et la main et la lettre ont menti toutes deux. Gr.-R. Poussez.

ÉR. Elle est de vous ; suffit : même fortune.

Mar. Ferme.

Luc. J'aurais regret d'en épargner aucune.

GR.-R. N'ayez pas le dernier.

Mar. Tenez bon jusqu'au bout. Luc. Enfin, voilà le reste.

Ér. Et, grâce au Ciel, c'est tout.

Que sois-je exterminé, si je ne tiens parole! Luc. Me confonde le Ciel, si la mienne est frivole!

Én. Adieu donc.

Luc. Adieu donc.

Mar. Voilà qui va des mieux.

GR.-R. Vous triomphez.

Mar. Allons, ôtez-vous de ses yeux.

in their way. It is, in fact, an imposture, and I return it to you.

GR.-R. Good.

Luc. And I will follow your example and return you everything likewise. Here is the diamond which you forced me to accept.

MAR. Very good.

Ér. Here is also a bracelet of yours.

Luc. And this agate seal belongs to you.

ÉR. (reads). 'You love me with a passionate love. Eraste, and yearn to know if I return your love. If I do not love you as ardently as you love me, at least I am delighted you love me as you do.'-Lucile.

ÉR. (continues). You assured me by this letter that you accepted my devotion? It was a lie, and deserves this treatment.

Luc. (reads). 'I do not know what may be the fate of my passionate love, or how long I may have to suffer, but this I know, oh beauteous siren. that I shall love you for ever. Eraste.' (She proceeds.) This told me of your everlasting devotion? hand and letter lie.

Gr.-R. Go on.

ÉR. This is also yours; so it shall share the same fate.

MAR. Be firm.

Luc. I should be sorry to keep one of them.

GR.-R. Do not let her have the last word.

MAR. Keep on boldly to the end.

Luc. Therefore, here are the rest.

ÉR. And, thank Heaven this is the last! May I perish if I do not keep my word.

Luc. Heaven confound me if mine be lightly uttered.

Én. Farewell, then. Luc. Farewell, then.

Mar. Everything went off excellently.

GR.-R. You have won the day.

MAR. Come, let us get out of his sight.

GR.-R. Retirez-vous après cet effort de courage.

Mar. Qu'attendez-vous encor?

Gr.-R. Que faut-il davantage? Ér. Ha! Lucile, Lucile, un cœur comme le mien

Se fera regretter, et je le sais fort bien.

Luc. Éraste, Éraste, un cœur fait comme est fait le vôtre

Se peut facilement réparer par un autre.

Én. Non, non: cherchez partout, vous n'en aurez jamais

De si passionné pour vous, je vous promets.
Je ne dis pas cela pour vous rendre attendrie:
J'aurais tort d'en former encore quelque envie.
Mes plus ardents respects n'ont pu vous obliger;
Vous avez voulu rompre: il n'y faut plus songer;
Mais personne, après moi, quoi qu'on vous fasse
entendre,

N'aura jamais pour vous de passion si tendre.

Luc. Quand on aime les gens, on les traite autrement; On fait de leur personne un meilleur jugement. Én. Quand on aime les gens, on peut, de jalousie,

Sur beaucoup d'apparence, avoir l'âme saisie; Mais alors qu'on les aime, on ne peut en effet Se résoudre à les perdre, et vous, vous l'avez fait.

Luc. La pure jalousie est plus respectueuse. Én. On voit d'un œil plus doux une offense amou-

reuse.

Luc. Non, votre cœur, Éraste, était mal enflammé. Éra. Non, Lucile, jamais vous ne m'avez aimé.

Luc. Eh! je crois que cela faiblement vous soucie. Peut-être en serait-il beaucoup mieux pour ma vie, Si je . . . Mais laissons là ces discours superfius:

Je ne dis point quels sont mes pensers là-dessus.

Ér. Pourquoi.

Luc. Par la raison que nous rompons ensemble, Et que cela n'est plus de saison, ce me semble. Én. Nous rompons?

Luc. Oui, vraiment: quoi? n'en est-ce pas fait?

GR.-R. You had better come away after this hard tussle.

MAR. Why do you still hang about?

GR.-R. What more do you want?

En. Ah! Lucile, Lucile, I know well that a heart like mine will be missed.

Luc. Éraste, Éraste, a heart like yours can easily be replaced by another.

Ér. No, no, search everywhere, and I guarantee that you will never meet with any one so passionately in love with you. I do not tell you this to awaken pity: it would be wrong to wish it. My most ardent desires would not have power to move you; you wished to cancel our engagement, therefore it is no more to be thought of. But, whatever people may say, nobody will ever love you so affectionately as I have done.

Luc. When you love a woman, you do not treat her like this; you think better of her.

ÉR. Lovers are apt to be jealous on the least suspicion. But, if they really love, they do not seek to drift apart, and that is what you have done.

Luc. Real jealousy shows more attachment.

ÉR. An offence caused by the being loved is looked upon more leniently.

Luc. No, Eraste, you were never deeply in love.

Er. No, Lucile, you never loved me.

Luc. Oh! I do not think that that troubles you much. Perhaps it would have been far better for me, if I... But let us drop this useless talk. I will not tell you what I think about it all.

ÉR. Why?

Luc. Because we have broken off our engagement, and by my reckoning it would be unseemly.

ÉR. Have we broken off?

Luc. Yes, indeed. What? Have we not just done so?

Ér. Et vous voyez cela d'un esprit satisfait?

Luc. Comme vous.

Ér. Comme moi?

Luc. Sans doute: c'est faiblesse De faire voir aux gens que leur perte nous blesse.

En. Mais, cruelle, c'est vous qui l'avez bien voulu. Luc. Moi? Point du tout: c'est vous qui l'avez

résolu.

Én. Moi? Je vous ai cru là faire un plaisir extrême. Luc. Point: vous avez voulu vous contenter vousmême

Én. Mais si mon cœur encor revoulait sa prison . . . Si, tout fâché qu'il est, il demandait pardon? . . .

Luc. Non, non, n'en faites rien: ma faiblesse est trop grande,

J'aurais peur d'accorder trop tôt votre demande. Én. Ha! vous ne pouvez pas trop tôt me l'accorder, Ni moi sur cette peur trop tôt le demander. Consentez-y, Madame: une flamme si belle

Doit, pour votre intérêt, demeurer immortelle. Je le demande enfin: me l'accorderez-vous,

Ce pardon obligeant?
Luc. Ramenez-moi chez nous.

Scène IV

MARINETTE, GROS-RENÉ

Mar. Oh! la lâche personne! Gr.-R. Ha! le faible courage!

Mar. J'en rougis de dépit. Gr.-R. J'en suis gonflé de rage.

Ne t'imagine pas que je me rende ainsi.

MAR. Et ne pense pas, toi, trouver ta dupe aussi.

Gr.-R. Viens, viens frotter ton nez auprès de ma colère.

MAR. Tu nous prends pour une autre, et tu n'as pas

ER. And you can speak of it calmly?

Luc. Even as you can.

Ér. As I?

Luc. Certainly. It shows a lack of courage to let people see that we are sorry when we lose them.

ÉR. But, cruel girl, it was you who desired it. Luc. I? Nothing of the kind. It was you who took

the idea into your head.

ÉR. I? I thought it would give you great pleasure. Luc. Not at all. You did it to please yourself.

ÉR. But suppose my heart still wished to take up its old chains. . . If, weighed down by grief, it should ask for forgiveness? . .

Luc. No, no, do nothing of the kind. I am too weak. I am afraid I might grant your request but too soon.

ÉR. Ah! You cannot grant it to me too quickly, nor can I ask it too quickly. Consent, Madam; so devoted a passion ought, for your own sake, to become immortal. Come, I ask it of you: grant me this pardon out of the kindness of your heart.

Luc. Take me home.

Scene IV

MARINETTE, GROS-RENÉ

Mar. Well, she was a fool!

GR.-R. What an idiot he was!

MAR. I blush for her.

GR.-R. It is enough to make a fellow swear. Do not think I shall give in like that.

Mar. And do not imagine I mean to be made your dupe either.

GR.-R. You need not try to gull me.

MAR. I am not the girl you take me for; you have not to deal with my foolish mistress. I have only A ma sotte maîtresse. Ardez le beau museau, Pour nous donner envie encore de sa peau! Moi, j'aurais de l'amour pour ta chienne de face? Moi, je te chercherais? Ma foi, l'on t'en fricasse Des filles comme nous!

Oui? tu le prends par là? GR.-R. Tiens, tiens, sans y chercher tant de facon, voilà Ton beau galand de neige, avec ta nompareille: Il n'aura plus l'honneur d'être sur mon oreille.

MAR. Et toi, pour te montrer que tu m'es à mépris, Voilà ton demi-cent d'épingles de Paris, Que tu me donnas hier avec tant de fanfare.

GR.-R. Tiens encor ton couteau; la pièce est riche et rare:

Il te coûta six blancs lorsque tu m'en fis don. MAR. Tiens tes ciseaux, avec ta chaîne de laiton.

GR.-R. J'oubliais d'avant-hier ton morceau de fromage:

Tiens. Je voudrais pouvoir rejeter le potage Que tu me fis manger, pour n'avoir rien à toi.

MAR. Je n'ai point maintenant de tes lettres sur moi; Mais j'en ferai du feu jusques à la dernière. GR.-R. Et des tiennes tu sais ce que j'en saurai faire?

MAR. Prends garde à ne venir jamais me reprier. GR.-R. Pour couper tout chemin à nous rapatrier,

Il faut rompre la paille : une paille rompue Rend, entre gens d'honneur, une affaire conclue. Ne fais point les doux yeux : je veux être fâché.

MAR. Ne me lorgne point, toi : j'ai l'esprit trop touché. GR.-R. Romps: voilà le moyen de ne s'en plus dédire. Romps: tu ris, bonne bête?

Oui, car tu me fais rire. MAR. GR.-R. La peste soit ton ris! Voilà tout mon cour-

Déjà dulcifié. Qu'en dis-tu? romprons-nous, Ou ne romprons-nous pas?



DEFIT AMOUREUX
(Acta IV Scene IV)

to squint at your fine mug to make me hanker after you indeed! Do you suppose I could be smitten by your ugly face? Should I be likely to run after you? You may take my word for it, you won't find girls like me ready to lick your boots!

GR.-R. So! That is the way you talk, is it? Look here, I don't want your dirty lace favours and your paltry bit of ribbon; so you needn't think they will be honoured by being worn by me any longer.

Mar. And to show you how I despise you, here, take back your fifty Paris pins which you made such a fuss about when you gave them to me yesterday.

Gr.-R. Take back your knife also; a mighty fine gift it was too: it must have cost you quite a penny

when you gave it me.

MAR. Here are your scissors with their imitation metal chain.

GR.-R. I forgot the piece of cheese you gave me the day before yesterday. Take it. I wish I could throw up the soup you made me eat, and then I should not have anything belonging to you.

MAR. I have now none of your letters about me; but

I will burn them, every one.

GR.-R. And do you know what I shall do with yours? MAR. Mind you never come whining after me again.

GR.-R. To put an end to all fear of being reconciled, we must break a straw: when two people belonging to the world of fashion break a straw, it signifies that the affair is concluded. Don't leer at me, I intend to be angry.

MAR. And don't you ogle me, my blood is up.

GR.-R. Break it: that is the way to prevent going back on your word. Break it. What are you laughing at, you hussy?

MAR. Why, you make me laugh.

GR.-R. Plague take your grins. You have pounded my anger to bits. What do you say? Shall we or shall we not break it? MAR. Vois.

Gr.-R. Vois, toi.

MAR. Vois, toi-même. GR.-R. Est-ce que tu consens que jamais je ne t'aime?

Mar. Moi? Ce que tu voudras.

Gr.-R. Ce que tu voudras, toi:

MAR. Je ne dirai rien.

GR.-R. Ni mon non plus.

Mar. Ni moi.

Gr.-R. Ma foi, nous ferons mieux de quitter la grimace:

Touche, je te pardonne.

MAR. Et moi, je te fais grâce. Gr.-R. Mon Dieu . qu'à tes appas je suis acoquiné!

Mar. Que Marinette est sotte après son Gros-René!

FIN DU QUATRIÈME ACTE

ACTE V

Scène I

MASCARILLE

Mas. 'Dès que l'obscurité régnera dans la ville, Je me veux introduire au logis de Lucile: Va vité de ce pas préparer pour tantôt Et la lanterne sourde, et les armes qu'il faut.' Quand il m'a dit ces mots, il m'a semblé d'entendre:

'Va vitement chercher un licou pour te pendre.' Venez çà, mon patron (car dans l'étonnement Mar. As you like,

GR.-R. Nav, as you like.

MAR. Please yourself.

GR. R. Do you wish me never to cease caring for you?

MAR. I? Just as you wish.

GR.-R. Nav, just as you wish. You have only to speak.

MAR. I will not say anything.

GR.-R. No more will I.

MAR. Neither will I.

GR.-R. Come now, we had better stop this fooling. Shake hands. I forgive you.

MAR. And I, I forgive you.

GR.-R. Bless me! How you have made a slave of me with your charms!

Mar. What a fool Marinette is where her Gros-René is concerned!

END OF THE FOURTH ACT

ACT V

Scene I

MASCARILLE

Mas. 'As soon as it is dark I will slip into Lucile's room: You go at once and get ready the dark lantern and whatever weapons are useful.' When he said this, it sounded for all the world as though he had said, 'Go immediately and fetch a halter to hang yourself.' I say, master, I was so astonished when I first received your order, I had no time to

Où m'a jeté d'abord un tel commandement. 'Je n'ai pas eu le temps de vous pouvoir répondre ; Mais je vous veux ici parler, et vous confondre: Défendez-vous donc bien, et raisonnons sans bruit). Vous voulez, dites-vous, aller voir cette nuit Lucile? 'Oui, Mascarille.' Et que pensez-vous faire? 'Une action d'amant qui se veut satisfaire.' Une action d'un homme à fort petit cerveau Que d'aller sans besoin risquer ainsi sa peau. ' Mais tu sais quel motif à ce dessein m'appelle: Lucile est irritée.' Eh bien! tant pis pour elle. 'Mais l'amour veut que j'aille apaiser son esprit.' Mais l'amour est un sot qui ne sait ce qu'il dit: Nous garantira-t-il, cet amour, je vous prie, D'un rival, ou d'un père, ou d'un frère en furie? 'Penses-tu qu'aucun d'eux songe à nous faire mal?' Oni vraiment je le pense, et surtout ce rival. 'Mascarille, en tout cas, l'espoir où je me fonde, Nous irons bien armés; et si quelqu'un nous gronde, Nous nous chamaillerons.' Oui, voilà justement Ce que votre valet ne prétend nullement : Moi, chamailler, bon Dieu! suis-je un Roland, mon maître,

Ou quelque Ferragu? C'est fort mal me connaître. Quand je viens à songer, moi qui me suis si cher, Qu'il ne faut que deux doigts d'un misérable fer Dans le corps, pour vous mettre un humain dans la bière.

Je suis scandalisé d'une étrange manière.

'Mais tu seras armé de pied en cap.' Tant pis
J'en serai moins léger à gagner le taillis;
Et de plus, il n'est point d'armure si bien jointe
Où ne puisse glisser une vilaine pointe.

'Oh! tu seras ainsi tenu pour un poltron.'
Soit, pourvu que toujours je branle le menton:
A table comptez-moi, si vous voulez, pour quatre;
Mais comptez-moi pour rien s'il s'agit de se battre.
Enfin, si l'autre monde a des charmes pour vous,
Pour moi, je trouve l'air de celui-ci fort doux;
Je n'ai pas grande faim de mort ni de blessure,
Et vous ferez le sot tout seul, je vous assure.

think what I should reply, but now I can say a few words and I will try to persuade you; therefore be on your guard and let us talk without getting angry. You say you mean to go and see Lucile to-night? 'Yes, Mascarille.' And what do you intend to do? 'What any other lover would do who seeks satisfaction.' What any man possessed of but few brains would do, say I, to risk his skin when there is no necessity. But you know my reason for doing this: Lucile is angry.' Well! so much the worse for her. 'But my passion urges me to go and soothe her.' Love is a fool, and does not know what it is saying. Pray, will love save us from a rival or a father or a furious brother? 'Do you think that any one of those wishes us any harm?' Why, most certainly; especially the rival. 'In any case, Mascarille, I put great faith in our going well armed; then, if any one should pick a quarrel with us, we will fight him." Yes, but that is just what your lackey wishes to avoid. I, fight, Good Heavens! Am I a Roland, master, or a Ferragus? You little know me. to take care of myself; and, when I remember that it does not need more than a couple of inches of cold steel thrust in the body to send a mortal into eternity, I am frightfully horrified. 'But you will be armed from top to toe.' Worse still: I shall be less able to run away under cover; besides, there is no armour so well wrought but that some wretched point can pierce between its joints. 'Oh! people will then call you a coward.' I don't care, so long as I can still masticate my food. When it is a case of sitting down to table, you may count on me as equal to any four; but when it is a question of fighting you need not count me at all. Moreover, though the other world may have charms for you. I find the air of this one very pleasant. I have no burning thirst for death or wounds; if you want to play the fool you must do it alone, so far as I am concerned.

Scène II

VALÈRE, MASCARILLE

Val. Je n'ai jamais trouvé de jour plus ennuyeux:
Le soleil semble s'être oublié dans les cieux;
Et jusqu'au lit qui doit recevoir sa lumière
Je vois rester encore une telle carrière,
Que je crois que jamais il ne l'achèvera
Et que de sa lenteur mon âme enragera.

Mas. Et cet empressement pour s'en aller dans l'ombre

Pêcher vite à tâtons quelque sinistre encombre! Vous voyez que Lucile, entière en ses rebuts . . .

VAL. Ne me fais point ici de contes superflus.

Quand j'y devrais trouver cent embûches mortelles, Je sens de son courroux des gênes trop cruelles, Et je veux l'adoucir, ou terminer mon sort: C'est un point résolu.

Mas. J'approuve ce transport;
Mais le mal est, Monsieur, qu'il faudra s'introduire
En cachette.

Val. Fort bien.

Mas. Et j'ai peur de vous nuire.

VAL. Et comment?

Mas. Une toux me tourmente à mourir, Dont le bruit importun vous fera découvrir : De moment en moment . . . Vous voyez le supplice.

VAL. Ce mal te passera: prends du jus de réglisse.
Mas. Je ne crois pas, Monsieur, qu'il se veuille passer.

Je serais ravi, moi, de ne vous point laisser; Mais j'aurais un regret mortel, si j'étais cause Qu'il fût à mon cher maître arrivé quelque chose.

Scène III

Valère, La Rapière, Mascarille

LAR. Monsieur, de bonne part je viens d'être informé

SCENE II

VALÈRE, MASCARILLE

Val. I never thought a day could pass so slowly; the sun seems to stand still in the heavens; and he has such a long course yet to run before setting that I believe he will never get over it. His slowness will drive me crazy.

Mas. What a hurry you are in to grope about in the dark and let yourself in for some nasty adventure! You know that Lucile stands firm in her refusal of you . . .

Val. Be done with your idle tales. Even though I knew I were to encounter a hundred deathtraps, so cruelly do I suffer from her anger that I would fain either seek to appease it or end my life. Of that I am quite determined.

Mas. I admire your determination, but the trouble is, Monsieur, that we must get in without being

heard.

VAL. Certainly.

Mas. And I am afraid I shall annoy you.

VAL. Why is that?

Mas. I have a distressingly bad cough and its troublesome noise would betray you. I cough every minute . . . You see how it torments me.

VAL. It will get better: take some liquorice.

Mas. I do not think, Monsieur, it will get better. I should be only too delighted to go with you; but I should never forgive myself if I were the cause of any misfortune happening to my dear master.

Scene III

Valère, La Rapière, Mascarille

LA R. I have just heard on good authority, Monsieur, that Éraste is very angry with you, and that Albert

Qu'Éraste est contre vous fortement animé, Et qu'Albert parle aussi de faire pour sa fille Rouer jambes et bras à votre Mascarille.

Mas. Moi, je ne suis pour rien dans tout cet embarras.

Qu'ai-je fait pour me voir rouer jambes et bras? Suis-je donc gardien, pour employer ce style, De la virginité des filles de la ville? Sur la tentation ai-je que que crédit?

Et puis-je mais, chétif, si le cœur leur en dit? VAL. Oh! qu'ils ne seront pas si méchants qu'ils le disent!

Et quelque belle ardeur que ses feux lui produisent, Éraste n'aura pas si bon marché de nous.

La R. S'il vous faisait besoin, mon bras est tout à vous:

Vous savez de tout temps que je suis un bon frère. VAL. Je vous suis obligé, Monsieur de la Rapière. LA R. J'ai deux amis aussi que je vous puis donner, Qui contre tous venants sont gens à dégainer, Et sur qui vous pourrez prendre toute assurance. MAS. Acceptez-les, Monsieur.

Val. C'est trop de complaisance.
La R. Le petit Gille encore eût pu nous assister,
Sans le triste accident qui vient de nous l'ôter.
Monsieur, le grand dommage! et l'homme de
service!

Vous avez su le tour que lui fit la justice : Il mourut en César, et lui cassant les os, Le bourreau ne lui put faire lâcher deux mots. Val. Monsieur de la Rapière, un homme de la sorte Doit être regretté. Mais quant à votre escorte, Je vous rends grâce.

LAR. Soit; mais soyez averti
Qu'ilvous cherche, et vous peut faire un mauvais parti.
VAL. Et moi, pour vous montrer combien je l'appréhende.

Je lui veux, s'il me cherche, offrir ce qu'il demande, Et par toute la ville aller présentement, Sans être accompagné que de lui seulement. also talks of breaking every bone in Mascarille's body because of his daughter.

- Mas. I? I have had nothing in the world to do with this affair. What have I done to have my bones broken? Am I, indeed, the guardian of the virginity of all the girls of the town, to be thus threatened? Do people ever credit me with resisting temptation? How can a poor fellow like me help it if they set their hearts on it?
- Val. Oh! They are not so naughty as they say! Whatever fine courage Éraste's passion may rouse in him, he will not get off lightly from us.
- LA R. If you should need help, I am entirely at your service. You know I am always a trusty blade.
- Val. I am obliged to you, Monsieur de la Rapière.

 La R. I have also two friends whom I could bring to
 your aid, who are equal to all comers and upon
 whom you may safely count.

Mas. Accept the offer, Monsieur.

VAL. It is too good of you.

- La R. Little Gille would also have helped us but for the sad accident which has just taken him from us. It is a great pity, Monsieur! He could always be relied on. You have heard of the trick justice has played him: he died like a Cæsar, and never uttered a sound as the executioner broke him on the wheel.
- Val. A man of that kidney, Monsieur de la Rapière, deserves to be lamented. But as to your escort, I am obliged to you.

La R. Very well; but have a care, you are being watched, and you may the get the worst of it.

Val. And I will show you how little I fear him, should he stop me, by offering him what he demands; I will set off at once through the town with no other escort than this fellow. Mas. Quoi? Monsieur, vous voulez tenter Dieu? Quelle audace!

Las! vous voyez tous deux comme l'on nous menace,

Combien de tous côtés Que regardes-tu là?

Mas. C'est qu'il sent le bâton de côté que voilà. Enfin, si maintenant ma prudence en est crue, Ne nous obstinons point à rester dans la rue:

Allons nous renfermer.

Val. Nous renfermer, faquin! Tu m'oses proposer un acte de coquin!

Sus, sans plus de discours, résous-toi de me suivre.

Mas. Eh! Monsieur, mon cher maître, il est si doux
de vivre!

On ne meurt qu'une fois, et c'est pour si longtemps!

Val. Je m'en vais t'assommer de coups, si je t'entends. Ascagne vient ici, laissons-le: il faut attendre Quel parti de lui-même il résoudra de prendre. Cependant avec moi viens prendre à la maison Pour nous frotter.

Mas. Je n'ai nulle démangeaison. Que maudit soit l'amour, et les filles maudites Qui veulent en tâter, puis font les chattemites!

Scène IV

ASCAGNE, FROSINE

Asc. Est-il bien vrai, Frosine, et ne rêvé-je point?
De grâce, contez-moi bien tout de point en point.

Fro. Vous en saurez assez le détail; laissez faire:
Ces sortes d'incidents ne sont pour l'ordinaire
Que redits trop de fois de moment en moment.
Suffit que vous sachiez qu'après ce testament
Qui voulait un garçon pour tenir sa promesse,
De la femme d'Albert la dernière grossesse
N'accoucha que de vous; et que lui dessous main,

Mas. Oh, Monsieur, why will you tempt Providence? What presumptuous folly! Alas! you see that we are both threatened from all sides . . .

VAL. What are you looking at there?

Mas. I smell a stick. Come, trust to my commonsense, and do not let us remain rashly in the street when we can go indoors.

Val. Shut ourselves up, you rogue! How dare you propose such a cowardly act! Let me hear no more of such talk, but follow me at once.

Mas. Oh! Monsieur, my dear master, life is sweet! Death only comes once, and then nothing happens for such a long time!

VAL. I will thrash you black and blue if I hear any more. Ascagne is just coming: let us go; we must find out what side he means to take. Meantime, come along with me into the house and we will get our weapons.

Mas. I have no hunger and thirst after this sort of thing. A curse on love and drat the girls; they like the sweets and then look as demure as nuns.

Scene IV

ASCAGNE, FROSINE

Asc. Is it really true, Frosine, or am I dreaming? Do tell me everything from beginning to

FRO. Be patient and you shall know all. Things like these, that do not happen every day, go from mouth to mouth rapidly enough. Well then, after this will was made, which specified that the wealth should only be inherited by a boy, it turned out that Albert's next child was a girl. Albert had laid his plans a long time before, and at once Ayant depuis longtemps concerté son dessein, Fit son fils de celui d'Ignès la bouquetière, Qui vous donna pour sienne à nourrir à ma mère. La mort ayant ravi ce petit innocent Quelque dix mois après, Albert étant absent, La crainte d'un époux et l'amour maternelle Firent l'événement d'une ruse nouvelle : Sa femme en secret lors se rendit son vrai sang : Vous devîntes celui qui tenait votre rang, Et la mort de ce fils mis dans votre famille Se couvrit pour Albert de celle de sa fille. Voilà de votre sort un mystère éclairci Que votre feinte mère a caché jusqu'ici; Elle en dit des raisons, et peut en avoir d'autres, Par qui ses intérêts n'étaient pas tous les vôtres. Enfin cette visite, où j'espérais si peu, Plus qu'on ne pouvait croire a servir votre feu. Cette Ignès vous relâche; et par votre autre affaire L'éclat de son secret devenu nécessaire, Nous en avons nous deux votre père informé; Un billet de sa femme a le tout confirmé: Et poussant plus avant encore notre pointe, Quelque peu de fortune à notre adresse jointe, Aux intérêts d'Albert de Polydore après Nous avons ajusté si bien les intérêts, Si doucement à lui déplié ces mystères, Pour n'effaroucher pas d'abord trop les affaires, Enfin, pour dire tout, mené si prudemment Son esprit pas à pas à l'accommodement, Qu'autant que votre père il montre de tendresse A confirmer les nœuds qui font votre allégresse.

Asc. Ha! Frosine, la joie où vous m'acheminez . . . Et que ne dois-je point à vos soins fortunés!

Fro. Au reste, le bonhomme est en humeur de rire, Et pour son fils encore nous défend de rien dire. changed you for the son of Ignès, the flower-seller, who gave you to my mother to nurse instead of her own child. Death having snatched away the little innocent some ten months later, while Albert was away from home, fear of her husband and maternal love gave birth to a new stratagem. privately took back her own child, and you resumed your right place in the family, while the death of his son was hidden from Albert, who was told that it was his daughter who had died. Now the mystery of your birth is solved, which your supposed mother has until now kept secret; she gives her reasons for doing so, but may have others, for her interests were not the same as yours. In fact, that visit from which I expected so little has been of service to your love affair more than could have been thought possible. This Ignès has renounced you; and as it was necessary to disclose the secret because of your affair with Valère, we two have told your father all about it; and a letter of his wife's has confirmed everything. This lucky chance encouraged us to go on, and, combining Albert's interests with those of Polydore, we have so arranged matters that these strange events have been unravelled, little by little, in order not to terrify him too much at the outset; in fact, the upshot of the whole matter is that we have led his mind so cautiously, step by step, to a reconciliation, that he is now quite as eager as your father to be lenient and to make the alliance you have contracted, and on which your happiness depends, legitimate.

Asc. Ha! Frosine, what happiness you are opening out to me . . . How much I owe to your successful efforts!

Fro. Well! the good man is in a merry mood, and has forbidden us to say anything of all this to his son.

SCÈNE V

ASCAGNE, FROSINE, POLYDORE

Pol. Approchez-vous, ma fille: un tel nom m'est permis, Et j'ai su le secret que cachaient ces habits. Vous avez fait un trait qui, dans sa hardiesse.

Vous avez fait un trait qui, dans sa hardiesse,
Fait briller tant d'esprit et tant de gentillesse,
Que je vous en excuse, et tiens mon fils heureux
Quand il saura l'objet de ses soins amoureux:
Vous valez tout un monde, et c'est moi qui l'assure.
Mais le voici: prenons plaisir de l'aventure.
Allez faire venir tous vos gens promptement.
Asc. Vous obéir sera mon premier compliment.

Scène VI

Mascarille, Polydore, Valère

Mas. Les disgrâces souvent sont du Ciel révélées:
J'ai songé cette nuit de perles défilées,
Et d'œufs cassés: Monsieur, un tel songe m'abat.
Val. Chien de poltron!
Pol. Valère, il s'apprête un combat
Où toute ta valeur te sera nécessaire:
Tu vas avoir en tête un puissant adversaire.

Mas. Et personne, Monsieur, qui se veuille bouger Pour retenir des gens qui se vont égorger! Pour moi, je le veux bien; mais au moins s'il arrive Qu'un funeste accident de votre fils vous prive, Ne m'en accusez point.

Por. Non, non: en cet endroit Je le pousse moi-même à faire ce qu'il doit.

Mas. Père dénaturé!

Scene V

ASCAGNE, FROSINE, POLYDORE

Pol. Come here, daughter: I may now call you by that name, for I know what is hidden beneath that disguise of dress. You have carried out a stratagem with so much boldness, cleverness and skill that I pardon you, and I am sure my son will be very happy when he knows you are the one he loves. You are worth a world's ransom, I assure you. But here he comes; let us have some amusement out of what has happened. Go and bring all your people here at once.

Asc. To obey you shall be the first token of my

respect.

Scene VI

Mascarille, Polydore, Valère

Mas. Misfortunes are ofttimes foretold by Heaven. I dreamt last night of unstrung pearls and broken eggs: Monsieur, such dreams depress me.

VAL. You wretched coward!

Pol. Valère, there is a fight in preparation in which it will be necessary that you should exercise all your courage. You will have to encounter a power-

ful opponent.

Mas. And will no one take it upon him, Monsieur, to prevent these people from cutting one another's throats! Not that it matters to me; but if, by any chance, something dreadful should happen to your son, do not blame me for it.

Pol. No, no; in this case I have myself urged him

to do his duty.

Mas. Unnatural father!

Val. Ce sentiment, mon père,
Est d'un homme de cœur, et je vous en révère.
J'ai dû vous offenser, et je suis criminel
D'avoir fait tout ceci sans l'aveu paternel;
Mais à quelque dépit que ma faute vous porte,
La nature toujours se montre la plus forte;
Et votre honneur fait bien, quand il ne veut pas voir
Que le transport d'Éraste n'ait de quoi m'émouvoir.
Pol. On me faisait tantôt redouter sa menace:

Por. On me faisait tantôt redouter sa menace; Mais les choses depuis ont bien changé de face; Et sans le pouvoir fuir, d'un ennemi plus fort Tu vas être attaqué.

Mas. Point de moyen d'accord?
Val. Moi, le fuir! Dieu m'en garde. Et qui donc
pourrait-ce être?

Pol. Ascagne.

Val. Ascagne?

Pol. Oui, tu le vas voir paraître. Val. Lui, qui de me servir m'avait donné sa foi! Pol. Oui, c'est lui qui prétend avoir affaire à toi,

Et qui veut, dans le champ où l'honneur vous appelle,

Qu'un combat seul à seul vide votre querelle.

Mas. C'est un brave homme: il sait que les cœurs
généreux

Ne mettent point les gens en compromis pour eux.
Pol. Enfin d'une imposture ils te rendent coupable,
Dont le ressentiment m'a paru raisonnable;
Si bien qu'Albert et moi sommes tombés d'accord
Que tu satisferais Ascagne sur ce tort,
Mais aux yeux d'un chacun, et sans nulles remises,
Dans les formalités en pareil cas requises.

VAL. Et Lucile, mon père, a d'un cœur endurci . . . Pol. Lucile épouse Éraste, et te condamne aussi ; Et pour convaincre mieux tes discours d'injustice, Veut qu'à tes propres yeux cet hymen s'accomplisse.

Val. Ha! c'est une impudence à me mettre en fureur:

Elle a donc perdu sens, foi, conscience, honneur?

VAL. That sentiment, father, shows you to be a man of honour, and I respect you for it. I know I have annoved you, and that I am to blame for having done all this without a father's sanction: but, however angry you may be with me because of my fault, the ties of kindred always prevail. You do well to recognise that I am unmoved by Eraste's threats.

Pol. They frightened me a while since, but things have now changed greatly and you will be attacked by a more powerful adversary, from whom flight will be impossible.

Mas. Is there no way of making it up?

VAL. I fly! Heaven forbid. But who, then, may it be?

Pol. Ascagne.

VAL. Ascagne?

Pol. Yes, you will soon see him.

VAL. He, who pledged his word to help me!

Pol. Yes, it is he who wishes to settle matters with you, and to put an end to your quarrel by the honourable method of single combat.

Mas. He is an excellent fellow. He knows that chivalrous people do not play with other folks' lives.

Pol. Finally he charges you with deceit, and, so far as I can make out, he appears to have justifiable grounds; therefore Albert and I are are both quite agreed that Ascagne ought to be allowed satisfaction for this wrong, openly and without delay. in accordance with the etiquette used in such a case.

VAL. And Lucile, father, has been so obdurate . . . Por. Lucile, who is going to marry Éraste, also blames you; and, in order the better to prove the falseness of your declarations, desires that you shall be present at her marriage.

VAL. Ah! such impudent conduct is enough to drive me mad. Has she, then, lost all sense, faith,

conscience and honour?

Scène VII

Mascarille, Lucile, Éraste, Polydore, Albert, Valère

Alb. Hé bien! les combattants? On amène le nôtre:

Avez-vous disposé le courage du vôtre? VAL Oui, oui, me voilà prêt, puisqu'on m'y veut forcer:

Et si j'ai pu trouver sujet de balancer, Un reste de respect en pouvait être cause, Et non pas la valeur du bras que l'on m'oppose. Mais c'est trop me pousser, ce respect est à bout : A toute extrémité mon esprit se résout. Et l'on fait voir un trait de perfidie étrange. Dont il faut hautement que mon amour se venge. Non pas que cet amour prétende encore à vous : Tout son feu se résout en ardeur de courroux : Et quand i'aurai rendu votre honte publique, Votre coupable hymen n'aura rien qui me pique. Allez, ce procédé, Lucile, est odieux : A peine en puis-je croire au rapport de mes yeux, C'est de toute pudeur se montrer ennemie. Et vous devriez mourir d'une telle infamie. Luc. Un semblable discours me pourrait affliger, Si je n'avais en main qui m'en saura venger. Voici venir Ascagne: il aura l'avantage De vous faire changer bien vite de langage, Et sans beaucoup d'effort.

SCÈNE VIII

Mascarille, Lucile, Éraste, Albert, Valère, Gros-René, Marinette, Ascagne, Frosine, Polydore

Val. Il ne le fera pas, Quand il joindrait au sien encor vingt autres bras.

Scene VII

- Mascarille, Lucile, Éraste, Polydore, Albert,
- ALB. Well! where are the combatants? Ours are here. Are you ready for the fray?
- VAL. Yes, indeed, I am ready, since it is forced upon me; and if I seem to have hesitated, it was from a sense of delicacy and not because of the courage of my adversary. But I have been hounded on, and my scruples are now at an end. I am prepared to go any lengths. I have been treated with such miserable treachery that my passion cries aloud for vengeance. I no longer lay claim to your hand: my love has been turned to gall; and, when I have put you to open shame, your wretched marriage will not trouble me in the least. Your behaviour, Lucile, is detestable. I can hardly believe it with my own eyes. You show yourself devoid of all modesty; you ought to die for very shame.
- Luc. Such talk might disturb me if I had not an arm ready to avenge me. Here is Ascagne: he will soon have the satisfaction of making you change your tune very quickly, and with but little effort.

SCENE VIII

- MASCARILLE, LUCILE, ÉRASTE, ALBERT, VALÈRE, GROS-RENÉ, MARINETTE, ASCAGNE, FROSINE, POLYDORE
- VAL. He will do nothing of the kind, though he were possessed of twenty supporters in addition to him-

Je le plains de défendre une sœur criminelle; Mais puisque son erreur me veut faire querelle, Nous le satisferons, et vous, mon brave, aussi. Én. Je prenais intérêt tantôt à tout ceci; Mais enfin, comme Ascagne a pris sur lui l'affaire, Je ne veux plus en prendre, et je le laisse faire.

Val. C'est bien fait, la prudence est toujours de saison;

Mais . .

Ér. Il saura pour tous vous mettre à la raison.

VAL. Lui?

Pol. Ne t'y trompe pas ; tu ne sais pas encore Quel étrange garçon est Ascagne.

Alb. Il l'ignore. Mais il pourra dans peu le lui faire savoir.

Val. Sus donc! que maintenant il me le fasse voir.

Mar. Aux yeux de tous?
Gr.-R. Cela ne serait pas honnête.
Val. Se moque-t-on de moi? Je casserai la tête
A quelqu'un des rieurs. Enfin voyons l'effet.

As. Non, non, je ne suis pas si méchant qu'on me fait;

Et dans cette aventure où chacun m'intéresse,
Vous allez voir plutôt éclater ma faiblesse,
Connaître que le Ciel, qui dispose de nous,
Ne me fit pas un cœur pour tenir contre vous,
Et qu'il vous réservait, pour victoire facile,
De finir le destin du frère de Lucile.
Oui, bien loin de vanter le pouvoir de mon bras,
Ascagne va par vous recevoir le trépas;
Mais il veut bien mourir, si sa mort nécessaire
Peut avoir maintenant de quoi vous satisfaire,
En vous donnant pour femme, en présence de
tous,

Celle qui justement ne peut être qu'à vous. Var. Non, quand toute la terre, après sa perfidie

Et les traits effrontés . . .

self. I am sorry he defends a guilty sister, but, since he wishes to fight, I will satisfy him, and you,

too, my fine gentleman.

Én. I took an interest in this affair a while back, but since Ascagne has taken the burden of it upon himself, I will not have anything further to do with it, I will leave it to him.

Val. You are wise, prudence is always advisable. But . . .

ÉR. He will give you satisfaction for us all.

VAL. He?

Pol. Do not be deceived; you do not yet know what a fine young lad Ascagne is.

ALE. He is ignorant as yet, but he will soon be enlightened.

Val. Come on then! let me see what he is made of at once.

MAR. What! before everybody?

GR.-R. It would not be decent.

Val. Are you jesting with me? I will knock your empty heads together. Come, let us see what this fellow is like.

As. No, indeed, I am not as bad as I am made out to be, and in the course of this business you will discover far more weakness in me than anything else: you will find out that Heaven, which shapes our fate, has furnished me with a heart incapable of withstanding you, and that it has appointed for you the easy victory of putting an end to the fate of Lucile's brother. Yes, far from boasting of the strength of my arm, Ascagne is about to receive his death sentence from your hands; but he would willingly die, if it were necessary to your satisfaction, in the act of giving you, before all here, the wife who lawfully belongs only to you.

Val. No, not after her faithlessness and disgraceful conduct, even though the whole world . . .

As. Ah! souffrez que je die, Valère, que le cœur qui vous est engagé D'aucun crime envers vous ne peut être chargé: Sa flamme est toujours pure et sa constance extrême.

Et j'en prends à témoin votre père lui-même. Pol. Oui, mon fils, c'est assez rire de ta fureur. Et je vois qu'il est temps de te tirer d'erreur. Celle à qui par serment ton âme est attachée Sous l'habit que tu vois à tes yeux est cachée; Un intérêt de bien, dès ses plus jeunes ans, Fit ce déguisement qui trompe tant de gens ; Et depuis peu l'amour en a su faire un autre, Qui t'abusa, joignant leur famille à la nôtre. Ne va point regarder à tout le monde aux yeux : Je te fais maintenant un discours sérieux. Oui, c'est elle, en un mot, dont l'adresse subtile. La nuit, recut ta foi sous le nom de Lucile, Et qui par ce ressort, qu'on ne comprenait pas, A semé parmi vous un si grand embarras. Mais, puisqu'Ascagne ici fait place à Dorothée, Il faut voir de vos feux toute imposture ôtée, Et qu'un nœud plus sacré donne force au premier.

Alb. Et c'est là justement ce combat singulier Qui devait envers nous réparer votre offense Et pour qui les édits n'ont point fait de défense. Pol. Un tel événement rend tes esprits confus; Mais en vain tu voudrais balancer là-dessus. Val. Non, non, je ne veux pas songer à m'en défendre:

Et si cette aventure a lieu de me surprendre, La surprise me flatte, et je me sens saisir De merveille à la fois, d'amour et de plaisir. Se peut-il que ces yeux . . . ?

Alb. Cet habit, cher Valère, Souffre mal les discours que vous lui pourriez faire. As. Ah! Permit me, Valère, to tell you that the heart that is bound to you is not guilty of any crime towards you. Her love has been ever pure. and her constancy firm; I call your own father himself to testify that I speak the truth.

Pol. Yes, my son, we have laughed long enough at your anger, it is now time to undeceive you. She to whom you are bound by your pledged word is hidden beneath the dress you see. A matter of property caused the need for this disguise in her earliest years, and it has deceived everybody. But, lately, her passion made her don another disguise, which took you in and united the two families. Do not look at every one in such amazement: I am telling you the actual truth. Yes. it is she, in fact, whose clever skill contrived to receive your vows that night under the name of Lucile, and who, by this trick, which no one found out, brought about such great complications all round. And now, since Ascagne makes room for Dorothée, your passion is released from all need of mystery, and the bonds you secretly contracted shall be openly confirmed.

ALB. And this is the duel by which you were to give us all satisfaction for your sin, a duel not forbidden by the laws.

Pol. It may well amaze you, but it is too late now for hesitation.

VAL. No. no. I have no wish to draw back: if this turn of events has astonished me, it is also a happy surprise. I find myself overcome with admiration and love and joy. Is it possible that those eves . . .?

Alb. That dress, dear Valère, is not a decent one in which to receive your protestations of love. She Allons lui faire en prendre un autre; et cependant

Vous saurez le détail de tout cet incident.
Val. Vous, Lucile, pardon, si mon âme abusée . . .
Luc. L'oubli de cette injure est une chose aisée.
Alb. Allons, ce compliment se fera bien chez nous,
Et nous aurons loisir de nous en faire tous.

Én. Mais vous ne songez pas, en tenant ce langage, Qu'il reste encor ici des sujets de carnage: Voilà bien à tous deux notre amour couronné; Mais de son Mascarille et de mon Gros-René, Par qui doit Marinette être ici possédée? Il faut que par le sang l'affaire soit vidée. Mas. Nenni, nenni: mon sang dans mon corps sied

IAS. Nenni, nenni: mon sang dans mon corps sied trop bien.

Qu'il l'épouse en repos, cela ne me fait rien:
De l'humeur que je sais la chère Marinette,
L'hymen ne ferme pas la porte à la fleurette.
MAB. Et tu crois que de toi je ferais mon galant?
Un mari, passe encor: tel qu'il est, on le prend;
On n'y va pas chercher tant de cérémonie.
Mais il faut qu'un galant soit fait à faire envie.

Gr.-R. Écoute : quand l'hymen aura joint nos deux peaux,

Je prétends qu'on soit sourde à tous les damoiseaux.

Mas. Tu crois te marier pour toi tout seul, compère?

Gr.-R. Bien entendu: je veux une femme sévère, Ou je ferai beau bruit.

Mas. Eh! mon Dieu! tu feras Comme les autres font, et tu t'adouciras. Ces gens, avant l'hymen, si fàcheux et critiques, Dégénèrent souvent en maris pacifiques.

Mar. Va, va, petit mari, ne crains rien de ma toi: Les douceurs ne feront que blanchir contre moi, Et je te dirai tout. must go and put on another; meanwhile, you shall know full particulars of this affair.

VAL. Pardon me, Lucile, if I was deceived . . .

Luc. That injury will soon be forgotten.

Alb. Come, these compliments will be far more fitting within doors where we shall have leisure to say

everything we please.

En. But, by your conversation, you do not seem to think that there still remains cause for bloodshed. Our troubles are indeed at an end; but who is to have Marinette? his Mascarille or my Gros-René? that matter will bave to be settled by a little bloodletting.

Mas. Nay, nay, my blood is too comfortable where it is in my body: he may marry her in peace for aught I care; I know dear Marinette too well to fear that

marriage will put an end to gallantry.

Mar. And you imagine I would have you for my lover? A husband is of no account, any one will do for that: one does not look for anything great in marriage; but a lover should be all that heart can desire.

GR.-R. Look you here! When marriage has made us one flesh, I shall make you turn a deaf ear to all

such hangers-on.

Mas. Do you think, my friend, you alone are going to marry her?

GR.-R. Of course I do. I intend to have a respectable wife or else I will know the reason why.

Mas. Oh! Good gracious me! it will be the same in your case as it is with every one else; you will become meek and mild. Men who are capricious and jealous before marriage generally end in being submissive husbands.

Mar. There, there, my dear, don't be uneasy about my virtue. Sweet speeches will not touch me and

I will tell you everything.

Mas. Oh! las! fine pratique!

MAR. Taisez-vous, as de pique.

Alb. Pour la troisième fois, allons-nous en chez nous
Poursuivre en liberté des entretiens si doux.

FIN DU CINQUIÈME ET DERNIER ACTE

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Mas. Oh fie! what a cunning lass to make her husband her confident! . . .

MAR. Hold your tongue, you rogue. ALB. For the third time, I say, let us go indoors and continue these soft speeches in the privacy of our rooms.

END OF THE FIFTH AND LAST ACT

APPENDIX

For the early farces attributed to Molière, see MM. Despois' and Mesnard's edition of the works, vol. i.

- Page 15, 1. 12. blanche magic. White magic was supposed to be concerned only with good deeds and worthy 'spirits.'
- Page 21. 'Il y a ainsi desagreable, en un seul mot et sans accent, dans l'édition originale (1663). On lit des-agréable, avec un trait d'union, dans les éditions de 1666, de 1673 et de 1734; des agréables, en deux mots et au pluriel, dans les éditions de 1674-1710 (y compris les quatre étrangères) et de 1730; et des agréable, en deux mots et au singulier, dans celles de 1718 et de 1773.' Note in MM. Despois' and Mesnard's edition.

The pun 8 ll. below is, of course, a play on the words bourse and bouche.

- Page 79, l. 17. The edition of 1734 indicates that this is intended as an 'aside' to Lélie, as are several of Mascarille's remarks later.
- Page 155. Du Parc, who played the part of Gros-René, was very 'rotund.'
- Page 243, ll. 3 ff. la femme est... un certain animal. See Erasmus, Praise of Folly, apparently the source of some of Gros-René's remarks. He becomes confused with the glamour of his eloquence when he begins to speak of the 'stability of the ocean,' etc.
- Page 259. Roland and Ferragus. Personages in the Charlemagne Cycle of Romances.

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